UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

REDISCOVERY: TOWARDS A LOCAL WILDERNESS CAMP CURRICULUM

by

John Maxted ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts.

Department of Physical Education and Sport Studies
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435 Pine Hill Road
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20 May, 1997

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Rediscovery: Towards a Local Wilderness Camp Curriculum* submitted by *John Robert Maxted* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master of Arts*.

Dr. Barry Mitchelson

Dr. Harvey Scott

Richard Price
Mr. Richard Price

Dr. Stan Wilson

Date: 20 May, 1997.

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION - A TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The traditional way of education was by example and experience and by storytelling. The first principle involved was total respect and acceptance of the one to be taught. And that learning was a continuous process from birth to death. It was a total continuity without interruption. Its nature was like the fountain that gives many colours and flavours of water and that whomever chose could drink as much or as little as they wanted to and whenever they wished. The teaching strictly adhered to the sacredness of life, whether of humans or animals or plants...

Arthur Solomon, a Nishnawbe spiritual teacher.

DEDICATION

To my Parents and Grandparents, who have shared with me their many important teachings, stories, life experiences and support, and to Sam, our small man with the big smile and those inquisitive eyes soaking up everything around him.

ABSTRACT

'Rediscovery' is an international network of wilderness education camps developed and coordinated by First Nation communities. Camp programs typically highlight the uniqueness of local culture and ecological bioregion, and provide youth opportunities for personal, social and ecological growth in a wilderness setting. This work documents the process of a community in northern Alberta establishing their own Rediscovery-style camp. Utilizing a critically-oriented, community-participatory methodology the perspective of local native Elders is sought to develop a camp program that recognizes and acknowledges local knowledge. Elders are encouraged to become involved in the camp, through consciously acknowledging their own strengths, skills, and knowledge during the research interview process. Eight key themes spanning the traditional - modern interface contribute to a local, experiential camp program. A final reflective chapter critiques the research process and highlights a number of challenges for fledgling researchers conducting participatory research in a community setting.

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My academic journey from Aoteoroa, New Zealand, to the prairies of Alberta, Canada, has been rich with experience. An initial plan to investigating opportunities for fostering an environmental awareness through outdoor adventure pursuits was soon curbed by a 'push' towards better understanding indigenous perspectives on 'environment' and of the relationship between land and oral traditions. The source of such a 'push' I know not but I must acknowledge this destiny, for it has provided a truly rewarding learning adventure.

Many people have made this journey memorable. At two Rediscovery International conferences I met inspirational Elders, Rediscovery camp leaders, youth leaders, and members of the Rediscovery International Board. I was welcomed very warmly by these people, and have especially appreciated the support of Francis Erasmus from Fort McMurray. There was also a seemingly destined meeting with fellow New Zealanders, Kaumatua Poaka Hepi and outdoor educators Reo and Howard.

An opportunity to meet with Elder Wapaskwan in Edmonton on a number of occasions in early 1994 provided real inspiration for this project and I must thank Dr. Carl Urion for his introduction to this remarkable man. I must also thank Dr.'s Anne Hall and Pat Rafferty for opening my eyes to qualitative research and for their encouragement to pushing the boundaries a little. Similarly my Maori academic friends, Dr.'s Mere Roberts and Roger Maaka, have provided their own unique support from Aoteoroa.

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Finally and most importantly Susan, my wife and best friend, has been amazing through challenging times for the two of us both in Canada and upon our return home. Had it not been for her toiling behind the scenes a Masters degree would never have been beyond a far off dream. I can certainly say this work is as much Susan's as my own, for she has remained supportive throughout the thesis writing adventure. And to Sam, our six month old man, thanks for those many smiles and the shrieks of encouragement. I look forward to the three of us getting out and enjoying a post-thesis life!

CHAPTER 1: A JOURNEY OF REDISCOVERY 1

INTRODUCTION 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM 2

Involving Local Elders 3

WHY THE INTEREST IN REDISCOVERY? 3

AN INVITATION 5

RESEARCH ISSUES IN NATIVE COMMUNITIES 6

DIFFERENT WAYS OF KNOWING 8

Knowledge as Power 11

Putting People First 12

Acknowledging Local Knowledge 13

Indigenous Knowledge as Intellectual Property 14

Whose Knowledge and Reality Counts? 15

Further Ethical challenges 16

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH 17

Participatory Action Research (PAR) 18

Problems, Traps, and Issues 19

THE PATH CHOSEN 21

Ethical Approval 22

Elder Informants 22

DATA COLLECTION 23

Elder Interviews 23

Field Notes Journal 25

DATA ANALYSIS 25

WRITING STYLE 25

CHAPTER 2: REDISCOVERY WILDERNESS CAMPS 28

FIRST BEGINNINGS 28

REDISCOVERY TODAY 29

The Rediscovery International Foundation 30

Rediscovery Philosophy 32

Rediscovery and Community 33

Rediscovery Programs and Activities 33

REDISCOVERY AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION 35

The Philosophical Foundations of Experiential Education 35

Philosophy in Practice 37

REDISCOVERY AND CULTURAL EDUCATION 39
  Wisdom of the Elders 40
  Oral Traditions 41
  The Importance of Protocols 45
  Cultural Authenticity 46
REDISCOVERY AND ADVENTURE EDUCATION 47
REDISCOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION 51
  Rediscovery and Bioregionalism 53
  Homeland, Heartland: A sense of place 53
  Story as Environmental Education 54
  Rediscovery and Deep Ecology 54
  Living From The Land 55
SUMMARY 56

CHAPTER 3: SIX SEASONS OF REDISCOVERY 59

SEKWUN - SPRING 60
  A Northern Native Community 60
  Lessons in Cross-Cultural Education 61
  An Evening of Rediscovery 62
  The Spirit of Rediscovery 62
  The Invitation 63
  Spring Reflections 64
NEPIN - SUMMER 66
  Indians in Canada 67
  Indian Stereotypes 68
  Returning to Athabasca 70
TUKWAKIN - FALL 70
  Visiting an Elder 71
PIPON - WINTER 72
  Connections with Rediscovery International 72
  A Historical Investigation of the Community 74
  Revisiting an Old Friend 75
SEKWUN - SPRING 76
  Further Lessons on Protocol 77
  Local Experiences 78
  Calling Lake Seniors Association 80

Stereotypes Again 81
More Committee Meetings 82
Stories of Youth 83
Community Immersion 83
Returning to Calling Lake 85
The Sweat Lodge 87
Returning to Athabasca 88
NEPIN - SUMMER 88
Revisiting an Old Friend II 89
Looking towards the Summer Camp 90
Recruiting Staff 92
The Build Up to Camp 96
Orloff (Kammistekosik) Lake 97
More Camp Activities 99
Lessons from another Community Leader 101
Local Insights 102
Calling Lake Revisited 104
Summer Weather 106
Further Reflections 107
The Decision No 109
Respect and Protocol 111
Cultural Festivities 113
Gift Giving 114
A Local Youth Conference 115
Interactions with Youth 116
Abiding by the Protocol 118
A Second Workshop 121
Revisiting Orloff Lake 122

CHAPTER 4: TOWARDS A CURRICULUM OF REDISCOVERY 123

INTRODUCTION 123
THE SEARCH FOR CURRICULUM THEMES 124
1. COMMUNITY IMMERSION 124
2. COMMUNITY INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS 126
Cultural Analysis 127
Structural Analysis 129

Spatial Analysis *131*

Temporal Analysis *133*

3. GENERALIZING DATA TO RUDIMENTARY THEMES 135

Elders Perspective on Youth *136*

Observations of Youth *138*

Community Strengths, Comparisons, Contrasts *139*

Elder Needs *141*

4. COMMUNITY VALIDATION OF ANALYSIS 142

5. ESTABLISHING CURRICULUM THEMES 144

The Tree: A metaphor for growth and change *145*

A Growing Forest *147*

Curriculum Themes *148*

Active Living *148*

Being Strong *151*

Being There (In the bush) *152*

Cultural Strengths *153*

Protocols *154*

Respect *154*

Stereotype Removal *155*

The Future *155*

6. CONNECTING INTERRELATED THEMES 156

7. TOWARDS A CAMP CURRICULUM 157

Cultural Education Components. *158*

Adventure Education Components *159*

Environmental Education components *159*

CHAPTER 5: REFLECTIONS ON A JOURNEY OF REDISCOVERY **161**

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM 162

REDISCOVERY WILDERNESS CAMPS 164

COMMUNITY BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH? 165

Critical Objectives *167*

The Risks of Failure *168*

Methodological Constraints *168*

PROJECT OUTCOMES 171

Relaxed, Rural Appraisal *171*

Other Community Development Outcomes *172*

What the project has not done for community *175*
Future Outcomes *176*
PARTICIPATORY PROJECT ALTERNATIVES 176
A PERSONAL REDISCOVERY 177
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE JOURNEY 178
Implications for Community Development and Research Personnel *181*
Recommendations for the Community *183*
Recommendations for Rediscovery International *185*
Recommendations for future Research *189*
FINAL THOUGHTS 190
POSTSCRIPT **192**
REFERENCES **194**
APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY ANALYSIS CHECKLIST **202**
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT **204**
APPENDIX C: ELDER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE **207**

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE A: Rediscovery International Foundation, Organisational Belief Framework.

FIGURE B: Searching for Universal Curriculum Themes.

FIGURE C: The Tree as a Metaphor for the Growth of 'SELF'.

FIGURE D: Interconnected Themes - the Tree Trunk Metaphor.

CHAPTER 1: A JOURNEY OF REDISCOVERY

Introduction

I recall many magical moments from an adventurous month of sea kayaking and hiking along the remote southern shores of the Haida Gwaii archipelago during April 1994. The chilling and often-mountainous Pacific Northwest coast swells, the rushing spring tides, the lush old-growth forests, freezing nights camping on the beaches, the fogs and the drizzle, the natural hot springs, glorious meals of fresh seafood, and the diversity and beauty of a myriad of coastal birds, plants, and animals all made for a special time of personal, social, and ecological exploration.

I reveled in investigating as much as I could of my surroundings during that trip and became particularly fascinated with the history, lifestyle, and cultural richness of the local Haida people. It was a chance meeting with a group of local youth in Old Masset, during that educational adventure to the Queen Charlotte Islands, that has been the catalyst for this study, as a personal journal excerpt from the expedition highlights...

> "There is really something magic about this place. Even getting back to civilization is not the let down I was expecting after experiencing the remoteness and beauty of the southern coastline. Today we visited a number of Haida craftsmen around Old Masset town and I met some amazingly talented people who are obviously very proud of their culture and not too interested in making lots of money.
>
> This afternoon I spent almost an hour sitting in the sun talking to a group of school-aged kids who were waiting for cultural dance practice. They were a group of native and non-native children and had all experienced the Haida Gwaii Rediscovery camp last summer. I am convinced Rediscovery has found the secret formulae for educating youth, for never have I met a group of kids so aware and proud of who they are, nor as enlightened and empathetic about their natural surroundings. I sense these kids have a future here and could teach us all something about living in harmony together."

(Personal diary excerpt, April 1994)

Those youth on the Queen Charlotte Islands motivated me to further investigate 'Rediscovery', an international network of outdoor education programs focused upon personal, cultural, and environmental awareness. Rediscovery camps are typically coordinated by native communities, are not for profit, and incorporate local traditions and outdoor activities in their programs. Each Rediscovery camp has its own distinct flavor, as the local people provide experiences specific to their bioregional location, and their programs injected with their own special and often unique traditions and cultural strengths (Henley, 1989).

From my own investigation of Rediscovery camps sprung an invitation to assist a small native community establish a Rediscovery camp of their own. This thesis project documents and analyses the development of a traditional Cree-Metis Indian cultural wilderness camp in northern Alberta; a project modeled on successful Rediscovery wilderness camps operating throughout western Canada. The work identifies with, encourages, and documents some of the traditional wisdom and science of local Cree and Cree-Metis Elders suitable for sharing with community youth in a wilderness camp setting.

The Research Problem

The primary purpose of this work is identifying and acknowledging the perspective of community Elders regarding what should be taught in a local wilderness camp situation. The fundamental research question with this thesis project is therefore:

> "What are the specific life skills, values, experiences and knowledge that community Elders[1] feel are important for the education of local youth in a wilderness camp situation?"

It is envisaged the data collection process shall facilitate the evolution of a wilderness camp program specific and unique to the local area and people, and contribute significantly to the development of a local Rediscovery-style wilderness education camp. This work shall also document the community camp developmental process. These central research and development challenges present a number of significant secondary tasks, including:

- The selection and incorporation of a style of research that will assist local Elders recognize and acknowledge their own strengths, skills, knowledge and experiences.

---

[1] The capitalisation of the word Elder (or Elders) is deliberate throughout this work and follows the lead of many writers in acknowledging the important role these people hold in traditional native education.

- Employing research and community animation / facilitation skills to empower local Elders to incorporate their own wisdom and strengths to the local wilderness education camp concept.
- Personally assisting with the development of the wilderness camp community-development initiative without diminishing the power of local people.
- Personally assisting with the development of a camp curriculum and program without my own expertise in the field of wilderness education seriously influencing outcomes. This shall involve incorporating strategies to ensure the skills, values, experiences, and knowledge Elders identify as important for youth are indeed representative of the Elders and their community before they are incorporated to a camp curriculum.

Involving Local Elders

Representatives of the Rediscovery International Board of Directors have highlighted through personal communication the importance of involving local Elders whenever possible in the Rediscovery camp development process. There is an assumption from these discussions and the written material on Rediscovery wilderness camps that community Elders exist locally and are available for consultation. Yet the exact role of an Elder in Rediscovery programs is not well documented. There is also no written account of problems or issues faced by Rediscovery communities to ensuring local Elder input to their camp programs, nor strategies provided for ensuring Elder input.

I am interested in determining if traditional teachings, once the responsibility of Elders and parents, are integrated into the Rediscovery experience. I similarly question what constitutes someone being an Elder in the local sense, and what criteria can be utilized to ensure Elders have the authority to educate in a traditional manner. There are questions surrounding the appropriateness of including traditional camp elements into a curriculum of Rediscovery should no local Elders exist or be interested in contributing to the camp project. Therefore, determining the role of Elders in a local Rediscovery-style camp program will be an important aspect for this study.

Why the interest in Rediscovery?

Rediscovery wilderness camps present 'other' ways of teaching and learning in the outdoors. The maturity in which those Haida children I met in the Queen

Charlotte Islands spoke of themselves, others and their natural home reflected many of the themes alleged in Thom Henley's guidebook for outdoor education, Rediscovery: Ancient Pathways, New Directions. Those themes and the voices of Haida youth reflect many of the virtues I strive to engender in my own professional work. As a trained outdoor educator with a decade of formal teaching experience, I am committed to fostering personal, social, and environmental growth for my students. I have taught 'outdoor' curriculum in schools, outdoor education centers, for adventure outfitters, and at the university level. These 'outdoor' teaching experiences have reinforced to me the awesome power of the natural wilderness setting for personal growth and learning.

There are opportunities for fostering a sense of pride, caring, and empathy through my work, so that those in my charge treat themselves, each other, and their natural surroundings with greater respect. Yet I have not always been convinced the way I teach is 'the' most appropriate nor most effective medium for such growth. At times I have recognized the mainstream educational strategies I have been trained to utilize are simply reinforcing dominant stereotypes held by humans regarding their natural surroundings. Whilst my educational programs typically happen in natural areas, when reflecting upon my practice I often acknowledge that my striving for the realization of human potential has taken place at natures expense and without seriously challenging the many social and ecological issues facing the planet. I am constantly searching, as an educator, for other ways of teaching in the outdoors and for alternative theoretical constructs upon which to center my practice.

Western educational heritage is saturated with Greek philosophical ideals linking the mind, body and soul in what we now term as holistic education (Bunting, 1989). For the Greeks learning was experience-based, typically incorporating activities in a natural outdoor setting. But the Greeks were not the only founders of education. As Richard Kraft (1985a: 1) suggests, learning from experience has long preceded modern styles of education…

> Through an unbroken line of formal and non-formal education programs, experiential learning was passed on from parents to children, master to apprentice, through the centuries of unrecorded and recorded history, right up to the present day…

Rediscovery wilderness education programs similarly highlight the importance of 'other' forms of outdoor education, and the role experience plays in traditional, indigenous education. An investigation into Rediscovery approaches to outdoor education offers opportunities for exploring 'other' ways of teaching in and for the outdoors, to better inform my own teaching practice, and perhaps to better inform the outdoor education profession at large.

There is also a romantic element drawing me to better understand the Rediscovery model for outdoor education. From my upbringing in a small, rural community in Aoteoroa / New Zealand and from my professional work with Maori and Pacific Island youth, I recognize that traditionally these Polynesian people likely have a different understanding of their natural surroundings than I. There is a personal fascination with traditional ecological knowledge and subsistence living and I desire to understand some of the wilderness living skills and strategies employed by traditional Maori and Pacific Islanders. I recognize the pride surrounding Maori heritage and acknowledge the importance placed by these and other indigenous people on understanding their links to the past.

As one often deemed a native romantic it is my belief that traditionally - living indigenous people hold at least one of the important keys to a brighter, more ecologically and socially balanced world. I am motivated to learning from the collective wisdom of indigenous peoples and acknowledge such wisdom has derived from centuries of living in relative harmony with other people and the planet. A first hand investigation of the Rediscovery 'model' presents opportunities to immerse myself in the traditions and lifestyles of First Nations people in Canada, as well as exploring my own perceptions and attitudes toward Native people and their relationship with 'land'.

An Invitation

My quest to better understand Rediscovery wilderness education programs lead me northward in May 1994 to the Rediscovery International Foundation Conference in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta. One chilly evening during the Conference I found myself sharing strips of moose jerky with a group of Native Elders around a small smoky fire in a tipi. That tipi was a long way from my home in New Zealand and the local people were fascinated with my accent as well as my interest in the model of outdoor education deemed Rediscovery. We shared many stories into the early hours regarding the diminishing numbers of moose, the importance of knowing how to hunt and survive in the bush, the social problems facing youth today, of troubled and 'at-risk' youth, alcohol, drugs, suicide, the lack of respect demonstrated by youth, the importance of confidence, the need for enhancing self esteem, the need for youth to have something to do, and of the need for personal connections between youth and their natural surroundings.

Our discussions that night exposed many similarities between the problems of youth in Canada with those young people in my home country. It was that experience in the tipi at Fort Chipewyan more than any other that highlighted the importance of a program like Rediscovery for the disesteemed and 'at-risk' youth of the world. I shared with those Elders a common belief in the awesome power of the outdoors for growth and learning. A few days later I was deeply honored to be asked by one of the women from that tipi discussion to assist her with the development of a new Rediscovery camp in a community some 200 kilometers north of Edmonton.

That invitation presented an opportunity to better understand 'Rediscovery' through a "hands-on" involvement, assisting with the development of the Camp and perhaps contributing my expertise as an outdoor educator if and when required. It was also an opportunity to conduct scholarly research in a Native community. This was a challenge for which I had no prior experience and that required investigation into research strategies that would ensure a culturally and ethically appropriate research agenda.

During the following twelve months I immersed myself into the myriad of research approaches potentially appropriate for the community research situation. I became aware of the many issues surrounding research in First Nations' communities in North America and was committed to ensuring my research methods to be employed during this project were very acceptable to both the local and academic communities. The following section documents my journey through the community research and development literature, providing the necessary background to this study's epistemological direction.

Research Issues in Native Communities

A plethora of research has been conducted in the Canadian north, much of which has focused upon the native inhabitants of the vast geographical area. Adventurous anthropologists and ethnographers seeking to better understand or 'improve' the way of life of the local inhabitants provide a wealth of information and insight for researchers about to enter the native community research field.

Whilst the academic community may certainly be better informed as the result of research interest in a large number of native-Canadian communities, information generated has come with some cost to those individuals and communities investigated. Past research in predominantly native communities has seen little of the findings returning to the community or contributing to community or social development (St. Denis, 1992; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1987; Guyette, 1983; Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1983), nor has the research typically met the day to day requirements of Native people (Paraschak, Heine, and McAra, 1994). Similarly Ulluwishewa (1993), when reflecting upon research and development activity in Third World countries over past decades, states that conventional research approaches have typically failed to facilitate a lasting improvement in the quality of life of the people.

Research concerning native people has typically been initiated outside the community and carried out by 'outsider' researchers. Consequently local people have had little or no opportunity to correct misinformation gleaned from the research process (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1987) nor to challenge interpretations pertaining to their own communities.

Some research findings have had a serious effect upon the land and the people of northern Canadian communities (Masuzumi and Quirk, 1993; St. Denis, 1992), and have caused 'outsider - generated' problems for the local people. It is also apparent that some researchers have worked in isolated communities without due regard for the people living there (Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, 1982), to the point of exploitation in some cases. Reason (1994) is critical of the large amount of community research occurring throughout the world without the direct involvement of local people. He holds that this 'outsider' research is valuable only to the dominant culture, for the research process is centered upon developing and monopolizing, thus exploiting, local knowledge and local people.

These research issues have made many native people wary of outside researchers operating in their community. Increasingly those northern communities that place a high value upon their distinctive aboriginal traditions and community affairs have sought to control research activity through a variety of means (Masuzumi & Quirk, 1993), including the monitoring of researchers and limiting community access.

It is readily apparent that local people must be consulted when developing and establishing a research agenda in a rural community, and that the research methodology chosen is acceptable to the local people. One of the issues facing all research environments, including native communities, is that the chosen research methodology must clearly fit with the topic under investigation. Such a methodological decision is compounded by the differing relevance of the research to the community, to the researchers, and to the academic community. Paraschak, Heine, and McAra (1994:2) acknowledge the implicit and explicit relations underlying the production of academic knowledge in native communities, highlighting the dilemma between academic relevancy and native relevancy of research...

> The dilemma we face is that in the construction of our research we are beholden two sets of often incompatible standards of relevance, which actively claim our allegiance. The generation and dissemination of theoretical and empirical knowledge, within the constraints of the discipline, forms the academic standard of relevance. However, the knowledge generated in this way does not necessarily meet the practical, political, or cultural requirements of Native people in the North at this time. This has made Native people very wary of outside researchers...

From an academic standpoint one must adopt the academic standards of relevancy, following established academic procedures to ensure ones research is contextually within the boundaries of the research arena. As Paraschak et al (1994:3) suggest, the validation of findings of "what is worth knowing" can be achieved through the dissemination of this knowing into the academic field, creating a dilemma when the findings are often of little or no relevance to the native community under study. As a researcher new to the community development field I set about exploring the range of research orientations available and to then identify a research methodology that would fit my research objectives and sit well with both the academic community and the community under investigation.

Different Ways of Knowing

Thomas Kuhn (1970) once suggested that the western scientific community, comprised primarily of a group of similarly educated males with similar beliefs and values, would be unable to develop new research ideas and knowledge unless there were revolutionary shifts in the values and beliefs of their scientific community. Such major shifts in thought, termed 'paradigm shifts' by Kuhn, would challenge existing values and beliefs held on research and would provide a foundation for a range of alternative research approaches. Paradigms provide a 'disciplinary matrix' (cf., Kuhn, 1970); a conceptual research framework with its own set of conventions and assumptions that is committed to by a community of researchers.

The dominant paradigm for social scientific research has historically been positivism (Henderson, 1991). Positivists are interested in prediction and control in a technical form (Sparkes, 1992; Henderson, 1991) and positivism is characterized by the objective measurement of a social situation through a series of social observations, with the researcher clearly outside and separate from the subject of the research. Of particular importance in such positivistic work is the quest for objectivity. That is, ensuring the thoughts, feelings, desires, or values of the researcher in no way taint the research process. To ensure such objectivity, prescribed technical methods of data collection are strictly adhered to. These methods, often called the 'scientific method', are seen as the purveyors of Truth for researchers adopting a positivistic approach.

The conventional scientific method appears potentially inappropriate for the study of humans, for people are complex beings resulting in social situations being incredibly complex. Henderson (1991) suggests that it is likely inappropriate to attempt to objectify humans for the purpose of data collection, since the interactions of humans are rarely predictable. Tandon (from Reason, 1994:328) is similarly critical of positivistic approaches often utilized in social research situations. He suggests the generation of pure knowledge cannot be the aim of social research because "...the assumption that there can only be one pure Truth in social research is erroneous". Similarly Tandon suggests that the endless pursuit of objectivity typical of positivistic research is inappropriate in social situations where an interaction between researcher and subject is required. He suggests the social science crusade for objectivity cannot be deemed research from a purists perspective when all control of research is retained in the hands of the researcher.

Western knowledge systems centered upon positivism have been acknowledged as limited in their ability to accurately define human issues in native terms (Colorado, 1988; Cruickshank, 1987; Knutson and Suzuki, 1992; Mander, 1991). Similarly Hoare et al (1993) pointed to the mechanistic, analytical reasoning, and reductionistic view of the scientific method, where all living and non living parts of the universe are examined as separate entities. Such a process deems the holistic nature of indigenous wisdom and science as irrelevant and unscientific, thus devaluing and ignoring important local ways of knowing such as oral traditions, native ecology, and intuitive wisdom.

Other evidence generated from community development and extension activities in developing countries suggests research which excludes human participants from all cognitive aspects of the process may deem the research potentially invalid, as Reason (1994: 325) highlights...

> Orthodox social science inquiry methods, as part of their rationale, exclude the human subjects from all the thinking and decision making that generates, designs, manages, and draws conclusions from the research. Such exclusion treats the research subjects as less than self determining persons, alienates them from the inquiry process and from the knowledge that is its outcome, and thus invalidates any claim the methods have to be a science of persons.

Those interested in better describing, interpreting, and understanding the meanings from within a social situation fall into the realm of interpretive or naturalistic social researchers. Interpretive researchers would argue there are multiple truths or realities existing in any social situation and to construct these realities the mind of the researcher is central (Henderson, 1991). An interpretivist would typically enter a social situation with a pre-formed problem of inquiry and through the development of a research relationship with the people within the social situation, would attempt to see the world through the eyes of the people relative to the problem or issue under investigation.

Interpretivists act in a subjective and interactive fashion as they seek to better understand the interests and purposes of the people. They construct the world from the participants point of view in order to examine the 'cultural modes of existence' (Sparkes, 1992) or the way of life of a particular group. Throughout the interpretive research process the researcher is central in data collection, analysis, and in the formulation of generalization. Whilst considerable effort is placed to ensuring the values and views of the researcher do not influence the findings, it is the researcher who is essentially the research tool as she or he interacts with the participants. Thus the researcher cannot help but influence the research process, and in effect the researcher is essentially a participant in the process. Interpretive researchers acknowledge the virtual impossibility of remaining objective in their work because their 'humanness' influences their data gathering and analysis (Henderson, 1991).

The methods utilized in interpretive inquiry are not the purveyors of a singular 'Truth' as they are with positivism. Important to the data collection process is the social skill and creativity of the researcher, thus the construction of reality in a specific social situation may vary between researchers and from study to study. As

Reason and Rowan (1981) highlight, validity in .interpretivistic inquiry work is 'personal and interpersonal' rather than strictly methodological as it is in positivistic work.

Knowledge as Power

The discovery of knowledge is not value free, as typically it is based upon the actions or experiences of the learner / researcher and will typically reflect the dominant interests of that persons existence. Knowledge is the single most important basis of power and control (Hoare et al, 1993), implicating the researcher seeking knowledge from native communities in a potential power struggle. St. Denis (1992) is adamant any research undertaken purely for the sake of knowing and which does not address power imbalances in a social situation is pointless, particularly in those communities experiencing socioeconomic crisis.

Reason's (1994) critique of research that does not directly involve local people in every stage of the inquiry process is centered around the issue of power. Top down, monopolistic research approaches typically serve the dominant culture and not the local people, enhancing the position of the researcher(s) through the development and monopolization of local knowledge. This approach Reason views as exploiting local knowledge for the benefit of the researcher-elite, especially as such a research position is typically available only to those in privileged positions.

Critical theorists advance the belief that knowledge in any community is driven by the dominant power interests of that community (Hoare et al, 1993) and that their work is motivated toward balancing power relationships through their work. Critical researchers are motivated to create social growth and change, and they accept the fact that society is constructed of groups with power and prestige and groups without power and prestige. Typically powerful, dominant groups in any society have an interest in maintaining the status quo whilst powerless groups may be interested in social change. Critical researchers are motivated to address these imbalances, or as Neuman (1991:63) suggests "to smash myths and empower people to change society radically."

A primary goal of the critical research process is the empowerment of those being researched. Thus by providing each participant with insights and understandings of their own social situation the participants can choose strategies to change their own circumstances and improve their lives. The critical researcher is interested in raising the consciousness of the participants of a social situation so they are able to improve their own conditions. Central to this research methodology is liberatory educator Paulo Friere's notion of "conscientization", or "knowing ones reality in order to transform it." (Friere, 1972: 67).

Thus the research participants are encouraged to assist in developing the research agendas, framing the research questions, interpreting the data, and subsequently transforming their own lives. Validity under the critical paradigm, according to Sparkes (1992), is not just about the credibility and trustworthiness of the research process but also about how effective the process is in terms of empowering the participants to change their world. Catalytic validity (cf. Sparkes) refers to the degree to which conscientization occurs through the research process.

Putting People First

Participation is the current buzzword in community research and extension worldwide (Thrupp and Haynes, 1994; Cornwall et al, 1994; Chambers, 1992). Collaborative, participatory approaches have proven effective in developing countries, where a move from 'top-down' to 'bottom-up' research strategies have integrated local people at every stage of the research process (Cernea, 1991; Uphoff, 1991; Chambers, 1992; Tandon, in Reason, 1994). Putting people first has proven effective in empowering local people to develop their own community projects in a sustainable fashion…

> ...where people and their wishes and priorities are not put first, projects that affect and involve them encounter problems. Experience also show conversely that where people are consulted, where they participate freely, where their needs and priorities are given primacy in project identification, design, implementation, and monitoring, then economic and social performance are better and development is more sustainable.
>
> (Chambers, 1991:515)

Guyette (1983) suggests research itself is a powerful tool for community development provided such development ensures the preservation of cultural tradition. When community members develop a communal research agenda and cooperatively participate in such projects, the potential exists for the generation of innovative solutions to community issues without large scale impacts to the traditions of a culture. Such community decision making Guyette calls 'self determination', where it is the community who makes the essential decisions regarding all components of the research process.

Acknowledging Local Knowledge

Cornwall et al (1994), Hoare et al (1993), Chambers (1993), Johnson (1992), and Knutson and Suzuki (1992) all promote the importance of locally derived, traditional knowledge for humanistic inquiry, utilizing a range of terminology's that are typically Indigenous Knowledge (I.K.), but also includes Traditional Environmental Knowledge / Traditional Ecological Knowledge (T.E.K.), Folk Ecology, and Ethno-ecology.

Ulluwishewa (1993) promotes Indigenous Knowledge as the local knowledge unique to a given culture or society which provides a platform for local agriculture, health-care, food preparation, education, environmental conservation and a host of other activities. Hoare et al (1993) suggests such knowledge is limited to that knowledge which is derived from traditional ways of living for native people. Canadian researcher Martha Johnson provides a working definition for Indigenous Knowledge based upon her experiences working in predominantly-Native communities in the North...

> "Indigenous Knowledge is a body of knowledge and beliefs transmitted through oral tradition and first hand observation. It includes a system of classification, a set of empirical observations about the local environment, and a system of self-management that governs resource use. Ecological aspects are closely tied to social and spiritual aspects of the knowledge system. The quantity and quality of IK varies among community members, depending upon gender, age, social status, intellectual capability, and profession (hunter, spiritual leader, healer, etc.). With its roots firmly in the past, IK is both cumulative and dynamic, building upon the experience of earlier generations and adapting to the new technological and socioeconomic changes of the present."
>
> (Johnson, 1995:3)

Indigenous knowledge is central to the notion of sustainable community development (Ulluwishewa, 1993). If researchers are really committed to community research and extension they must embrace locally derived knowledge and local based ways of knowing (Mathais, 1995; Cornwall et al, 1994; Chambers, 1991). Mathais suggests people in non-native cultures must get beyond using indigenous knowledge (IK) merely as a part of museum exhibits. She suggests researchers have typically paid little more than lip service to indigenous knowledge in community development programs and highlights the need to enhance the application of indigenous knowledge into research and development activities.

A more widespread acceptance of locally derived knowledge in community research could present other potential benefits for the academic community, the outsider-researcher, and the local community. These benefits include a better understanding of the perspective of local peoples, the bridging of any communications gap between researchers and local people, being able to recognize the accomplishments of the local people, allowing outsiders to familiarize themselves with local conditions, and most importantly increase the participation of local people and local organizations in researching, integrating, utilizing, and disseminating local knowledge (Rajasekaren et al, 1993).

St. Denis (1992) suggests insufficient research has been focused upon identifying the strengths of native communities to ensure their cultural and economic survival. Similarly, Hoare et al (1993), from their work in the Canadian north, are adamant that the reclamation of the culture of any native group who have undergone some form of oppression or serious acculturation is dependent upon the preservation of their indigenous knowledge. It is apparent for many Native people that Indigenous Knowledge is the central link of their cultural past, present day, and future.

Indigenous Knowledge as Intellectual Property

Documenting traditional knowledge is a popular area of research. However, aboriginal knowledge has the potential to be used in ways that do not benefit the local peoples (Masuzumi and Quirk, 1993), including profit making situations away from the community2. Such traditional knowledge, regarded in common law as intellectual property, belongs to the person or group of persons whose memory holds it. Historical breaches of intellectual property rights have made many Native communities wary of outside researchers and their intentions. More and more native communities are ensuring their knowledge is being recorded in an appropriate aboriginal context, ensuring the research will be of benefit to their local people, and that access to the information is retained by the people. Communities may seek to retain control of the research process, in full or part to ensure their knowledge is utilized in an appropriate manner. Community researchers have a moral and ethical

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[2] See Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World by Jack Weatherford for many examples of traditional knowledge being used by others for financial gain and without the appropriate acknowledgment or permission of those to whom such property belongs.

responsibility to ensure their research design acknowledges locally derived knowledge as the peoples science.

Whose Knowledge and Reality Counts?

Over recent years the increasing interest in documenting indigenous knowledge and belief systems by westerners suggests traditional knowledge can play a valuable role in research. Johnson (1995), Knutson and Suzuki (1992), and Mander (1991) all suggest such interest in traditional knowledge may be attributed to a general dissatisfaction with western science. Mander, in particular, points to the increasing recognition by humans of the inability of technology to provide solutions to many of the environmental issues facing the planet. That recognition, Mander suggests, is accentuating a move to investigate the ways of living in the past and the lifestyles of different social groups in order to discover more effective environmental solutions.

Chambers (1991:517) suggests much of the breakdown of research and community extension activities in developing countries results from the ineffective use of local knowledge. He suggests four problems occur during the process of generating, analyzing, and incorporating social information in community research: 1) things have come before people; 2) the poorer people have been neglected; 3) whilst people have come last, the poorer people have come last of all, and; 4) information has been acquired, owned, and analyzed mainly or only by outsiders.

Typically university researchers value the experience and expertise of their academic colleagues, but have a more difficult time accepting the research capability or knowledge of a native community person despite that person having the authority to speak for generations of involvement with the land (Masuzumi and Quirk, 1993). It is increasingly evident that it matters who generates and owns community derived knowledge (Chambers, 1991), especially if community sustainability and citizen empowerment are end goals of the research and development process.

Chambers further challenges community researchers to question whose capacity to learn and analyze is being enhanced through the research process. Current mainstream research approaches in indigenous communities appear to be contributing to the egos of academic researchers and a self perpetuating spiral of ignorance...

> ...they (community members) play along with us Professionals and pretend; so our power, dominance, behavior, and experiences make it harder for us to learn and understand the reality that is theirs.
>
> Chambers, 1991: 1

In a more recent publication entitled, All Power Deceives, Chambers (1994) looks critically at a number of errors in rural research in developing countries over the past forty or so years. He suggests that many research and development professionals have been wrong, yet at the same time very confident that they are right. Chambers examines some of the root causes of the errors and suggests professionals have dominated the people, have distanced themselves from the people, and have demonstrated an egotistical approach that has alienated the people from the research process. There are lessons to be learnt by researchers from these errors...

> Three lessons stand out. Each entails an up-ending or reversal of the normal condition which generated and sustained the error.... ... the first lesson is to replace dominance with deference and respect, and to reverse positions and roles... ...the lesson is to reverse power relations through changing behavior - sitting down, listening and learning, handing over the stick, facilitating and having confidence that 'they can do it'.... ... The second lesson is to reduce social and physical distance... ...to spend time close to people and in the field....the third lesson is to redefine professional ego. The lesson is to link professional prestige and ego with doubt, critical self-awareness, and enabling others.
>
> (Chambers, 1994b: 24 - 25)

Cornwall et al (1994) present a number of methodological challenges for the community research and development process. They suggest that a 'participatory' style of research is essential if researchers are truly committed to acknowledging the realities of those involved in the community under investigation. Participatory methodologies provide opportunities for producing knowledge, not discovering it, through the interactions of people (Cornwall et al, 1994). It is evident that the realities of local people need to count in the community research process.

Further Ethical challenges

Ethical guidelines and principles are clearly presented for research in native communities in Canada by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council Task Force (1983), the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1987) and the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (1982). The participation and respect of local peoples in the research process are central ethical themes, implicating the community researcher with a number of formal and informal ethical guidelines that must be followed when undertaking research within a native community. The primary purpose for each of the ethical guidelines is to ensure that the utmost level of respect is provide to the cultures, languages, knowledge, and values of Aboriginal peoples (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1987). Of concern is the impact of the research upon the participants, other community members, and the different cultural traditions within the community.

From community research and extension projects in a number of developing countries, Uphoff highlights assumptions typically held by dominant society when dealing with marginalised groups...

> The poor are assumed to be passive and grateful receivers of benefits from Government programs, becoming thereby also loyal followers. Those possessing power and wealth are usually determined to keep it, so a number of implicit assumptions are made about the poorer sectors: (a) they are predained to remain poor, (b) they are entitled to paternalistic services, but not to access to power and wealth, and (c) they are incapable of participating in planning and implementation.
>
> (Uphoff, 1991: 502 - 503)

From the wealth of literature surrounding native community research and development worldwide, it is readily apparent researchers and extension personnel need to get beyond these dominant stereotypes and assumptions, and to concentrate upon encouraging local participation and empowering local people.

Participatory Research

A myriad of participatory approaches have been utilized in community research and extension projects3. Participatory research has great potential for addressing the political aspects of knowledge generation and application (Reason, 1994) and has found favor in the Canadian north (Johnson 1995, 1992; Paraschak et al, 1994; Hoare et al, 1993; Masuzumi and Quirk, 1993; Ryan and Robinson, 1992, 1990). Participatory approaches are particularly suited to First Nations communities (Masazumi & Quirk, 1993) as the people have historically embraced building consensus and learning-by-doing. As highlighted by Fals Borda and Rahman (1991: vi), participatory research is all about "...the enlightenment and awakening of

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[3] see Cornwall et al. (1994) Extending the Horizons of Agricultural Research and Extension: Methodological challenges. In Agriculture and Human Values 11(2/3) pp38 - 57 for a comprehensive list and review of six predominant participatory approaches utilised in research and community extension work.

common peoples", thus addressing power issues and confronting potentially oppressive regimes or community structures.

Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Participatory Action Research is the predominant form of participatory inquiry utilized worldwide (Reason, 1994). Communities without sociopolitical power can utilize a PAR approach to social science inquiry and assist themselves to gain control of information that could influence decisions about their lives (Cornwall et al, 1994; St. Denis, 1992; Guyette, 1983). PAR is not exclusively research oriented, nor is it strictly an adult education or sociopolitical action process (Fals Borda and Rahman, 1991). Rather, these factors combine to provide an experiential methodology for empowering the poor or powerless…

> "Recognizing the marginalising effects of 'universal science' and how it produces ignorance, PAR aims to challenge relations of inequity by restoring people's self respect and agency. PAR is explicitly political in its aims, and explores the experiences of the poor, oppressed, and exploited groups. These versions of knowledge are recognized as 'Peoples Science' and are used to confront systems of domination. Local people are involved at all stages in research. Rather than being the objects of research, they become the producers and owners of their own information. ...Participation in PAR involves breaking out of relations of dependency to restore to people the ability to act on transform their worlds for themselves."
>
> (Cornwall et al, 1994:47)

PAR is a methodology where the lived experience and knowledge of the people is honored and valued and plays a predominant role in the inquiry process. Outside researchers may be involved with the participatory process and may provide some technical assistance, but it is the community insiders who provide the expertise in defining local research issues and developing culturally acceptable methods of addressing issues.

Fals Borda and Rahman (1991) highlight participatory research as requiring an "authentic commitment" and an "authentic participation" by both the outside researcher, if there is one, and all others involved. Similarly they suggest the process of inquiry must be... "rooted in the cultural traditions of the common people and in their real history..." (1991:5). At the center of PAR is Friere's (1972) notion of conscientization, or knowing ones own sociopolitical reality in order to change and improve it. PAR is explicitly critical in orientation. The potential for community empowerment and social change is viewed by Reason (1994: 329) as more important to the PAR process than any concerns regarding methodology...

> The methodologies that in orthodox research would be called research design, data gathering, data analysis etc. take second place to the emergent process of collaboration and dialogue that empower, motivate, increase self esteem and develop community solidarity.

Pragmatically PAR may well be suited to native communities, where community meetings and gatherings may serve to identify issues, foster a sense of community, and highlight the potential for liberation. Local people are able to make sense of the key information gathered, can reflect on progress, and can reinforce the process of participatory research (Reason, 1994). When the 'stick' controlling the research process is handed to the local people, PAR provides scope for a diverse range of social validation techniques...

> Thus storytelling, sociodrama, plays and skits, puppets, song, drawing, and painting and other engaging activities encourage a social validation of 'objective' data that cannot be obtained through the orthodox processes of survey and fieldwork. It is important for the oppressed group, which may be part of a culture of silence based on centuries of oppression, to find ways to tell and thus reclaim their own story."
>
> (Reason, 1994: 329)

More orthodox ethnographic approaches can also be utilized in the PAR process, if committed community participation exists. For example, gathering information through survey techniques then making sense of data from the peoples perspective (Reason, 1994) can be an important source of peoples knowledge and empowerment.

Problems, Traps, and Issues

Participatory approaches to community research typically emphasizes empowerment as both a means and an end to the process. Such participation involves attempts to overcome power imbalances affecting the local people, as well as attempts to change the economic conditions and improve the self-confidence and cultural integrity of the people (Thrupp and Haynes, 1994). A great deal is at stake with any critical, participatory project and the literature does little to address the implications or dangers to the community (or researcher) of unsuccessful projects (Chambers, 1991). Studies promoting the virtues of 'participation' tend to be long on rhetoric but far shorter on the real consequences of effective and ineffective processes. Similarly, writings from the field tend to romanticize local people, to exaggerate the democratic notions of the people, as well as ignore the potential destructiveness of the process to the people of the community (Reason, 1994).

Thrupp and Haynes (1994) voice their concern over exaggerated research reports from 'participatory' projects in developing countries, suggesting that as the popularity of participatory research grows, the potential exists for disappointment...

> Whilst such positive results are evident in some cases, they are sometimes exaggerated and not well substantiated; there is a lack of systematic documentation. False claims can also breed false expectations, and can also lead to disappointments and rejection.
>
> Thrupp and Haynes, 1994:2)

Participatory research is also fashionable (Cernea, 1991) as well as being 'politically correct', which Thrupp and Haynes (1994) suggests has lead to a number of community development organizations rhetorically embracing participation without applying participation in practice. Chambers (1992) suggests such faddism cannot assist participatory styles of research attain widespread academic acceptance unless a complete commitment is made to participatory approaches.

Chambers (1991) focuses upon other traps for the 'outsider' involved with a participatory project. He suggests "quick and dirty" research approaches for community development projects typically result in a lack of rapport developing with respondents, a failure to listen and understand local information, and an inability to understand local social and cultural relationships.

Of all the traps of participatory research addressed in the literature the most potentially damaging appears to be with the outsider-researcher recognizing what needs to be done in a community and immediately rushing in to 'help' (Reason, 1994; Chambers, 1991; 1992; Rocheleau, 1994). Such an approach ignores the local people, so that opportunities are not available to learn from or to empower community members.

Chambers advocates a "relaxed" approach to participation, so that the researcher does not merely reinforce dominant / authoritarian viewpoints and stereotypes. Relaxing appears a strategy that may assist in better identifying the 'right' local people. As Cornwall et al (1994) point out, labeling community members as insiders and outsiders can only simplify a series of complex social relationships and this can only be understood through determined, relaxed community observation. Hoare et al (1993), from their experiences with participatory, native community research in northern Canada, note the potential for exhausting the "expert" informants and creating political tensions through the informant selection process. Such outcomes could be injurious to the research process through distortion of results and perhaps undermining any emancipatory research objectives.

It is obvious that to conduct participatory empowerment work requires a special set of researcher skills. These skills are oriented towards 'people' rather than just focused upon the collection and analysis of data, as Reason outlines...

> There is a whole range of skills required for participative research, skills that are very different from those of orthodox research, and that include personal skills of self awareness and self-reflexiveness, facilitative skills in interpersonal and group settings, political skills, intellectual skills, and data management skills.
>
> (Reason, 1994:335)

Chambers (1992: 50) is encouraging to those new to participatory approaches, suggesting practitioners must "...feel free to start, to make mistakes, and to learn on the run." From the literature it is evident that self reflexivity is an important aspect of participatory research and it is inevitable that mistakes will be made and hopefully learned from in an experiential fashion. Cornwall et al (1994:52) are challenging and encouraging...

> "Learning to acknowledge the value and specificity of our own experience, while seeking ways to appreciate other perspectives will inevitably entail making 'mistakes'. These should be recognized as being valuable opportunities for reflection and change..."

The Path Chosen

From the experiences of these community researchers and theorists I have adopted a community-based participatory research approach that appears to best fit my intentions and the community under study. The process is critical in orientation. It seeks explicitly to motivate the community to develop their own Rediscovery wilderness camp, through the process of seeking the perspective of community Elders as well as gathering other ethnographic information whilst promoting the Rediscovery model to the wider community.

From my limited discourse with members and leaders of the Rediscovery International Foundation, it has been repeatedly suggested that those Rediscovery programs that actively involve Elders during a camp experience provide richer, more meaningful experiences for participants. This hypothesis I accept as a truth and one of the goals for my research is to encourage local Elders to become actively involved in 'their' wilderness camp project, perhaps as camp organizers, cultural advisers, camp directors, field staff, counselors, and / or camp Grandparents. I hope to assist Elders in recognizing their own strengths and knowledge through the interview process.

Ethical Approval

The guidelines for appropriate and ethical conduct of native community research activity provided by the University of Alberta, the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Studies are to be followed. The community involved in the research shall be consulted and formal, written approval granted. All Elders interviewed for this project, as well as those other community members with whom discussions were held, would be made aware that I was from the University of Alberta and informed of my research intentions. Appendix 2 is a copy of the verbal request for consent to be shared with each of the Elders acting as informants for the project. It was felt a verbal agreement was sufficient protection for both the Elders and the university community, and that attempts to obtain written consent from local people would potentially alienate individuals from the research and development project. This verbal consent format met the approval of the University of Alberta ethical review committee.

As well as obtaining consent from the community, the university, and the participants in the project, I sought formal approval from the Rediscovery International Board. As the project was to parallel the Rediscovery model and regular reference made to existing Rediscovery wilderness camps, the Foundations support was essential. During the 1995 Rediscovery International conference I took time to briefly outline the community camp development initiative and my research plans to conference delegates. There followed informal ethical advice from board members of the Rediscovery International Foundation, suggesting any camp developments must be conducted with the full support and guidance of the local people.

Elder Informants

There were questions in my mind regarding what constituted an Elder in the local community sense, and perceived difficulty with the identification and subsequent interview of these people. One of the special challenges would be overcoming my own romanticism surrounding Indian Elders and to accept a range of individuals from the community as Elders in their own right. Relaxed, informal time spent in the community would assist locate appropriate local Elders and to establish rapport with them. These Elder-informants would likely not represent a typical research sample. As Elders were identified, those who appeared able and interested in contributing to the local camp project would be brought on board as the project evolved.

According to Spradley (1979: 45) "one of the great challenges in doing ethnography is to initiate, develop, and maintain a productive informant relationship." Through the process of interviewing Elders my secondary objective was to motivate and enthuse them to become involved personally with the project, perhaps even as Rediscovery camp staff. Spradley highlights the difficulty in assessing the degree of informant enculturation. That is, the degree Elders selected and interviewed are representative of the local community. Cornwall et al (1994) also suggests the selection of local informants (Elders) will be a challenge. In the process of recognizing local knowledge they question what counts as 'local?', and highlight that the selection of key informants requires decisions on who will be involved, thus deeming some community members as less knowledgeable when they may be knowledgeable in different ways. The process of labeling community members as 'insiders' may also create problems. As Cornwall et al (1994) point out people may be insiders and / or outsiders according to their activity or purpose and much of their knowledge may stem from outside the community.

Data Collection

Once formal approval for the project was granted the process of data collection would commenced, involving a variety of approaches including in-depth interviews, discussion with community personnel, community observations, community meetings, and a personal journal. Latitude was also provided for the collection of data as members of the community saw appropriate.

Elder Interviews

I chose to utilize interactive, informal interviews to record the perspective of each Elder relative to three issues, as follows...

1. The needs of the youth in their community;
2. The skills, values, knowledge, and experience youth need to survive in today's world, and;

3. What, if any, of those skills, values, knowledge and/or experiences could be shared with youth in a wilderness camp setting.

I sought to elicit a rambling response during interviews that provided descriptive phrases, that highlighted the different perspective of each of the Elders (Reinharz, 1992), and which could be built upon in later conversations. As Spradley (1979: 58) points out "...skilled ethnographers often gather most of their data through participant observation and many casual, friendly conversations. They may interview people without their awareness, merely carrying on a friendly conversation while introducing a few ethnographic questions." I was optimistic this informal process would be valuable in generating data, provided formal consent was able to be achieved from all Elder-informants.

Initial conversations with Elders were not to be recorded and transcribed, but as rapport developed I would endeavor to audio record our conversations. Field notes would be recorded immediately following each of the initial interviews, with the notes expanded as soon as possible after interviews. Key points would be validated during further interviews and discussion with each Elder. Tape recorded conversations would be transcribed and recorded into a computer word processor as soon as possible afterwards.

The range and style of questions for interviews would vary between Elder-informants. The following is an overview only of the style of questions drafted for initial discussion with Elders...

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS...

- Tell me about local youth? What are their needs?
- What are the issues local youth are having to cope with every day?
- What skills, values, knowledge and experiences do youth need to survive in today's world?
- How can youth learn these important things in a wilderness camp situation?

STRUCTURAL QUESTIONS...

- What things should be included in a local Rediscovery wilderness program?
- How could we get youth learning about that? How could you teach that?
- You mentioned to me the other day about the local kids needing to learn to be able to survive - can you tell me more about that?

- What specific things do they need to know about survival?
- How could we go about teaching those things?

CONTRASTING QUESTIONS...

These would be very topic specific, and derived from previous conversations. The following are examples of potential questions…

- So why are hunting, fishing, and trapping skills important for youth to know in today's world when it is difficult to make a living with those activities?
- Verification questions... So it is the links to the past and the confidence that occurs from learning these skills rather than the actual activities?

Field Notes Journal

A written journal would be kept for the duration of the project with data derived from five main sources: discussions with community members; community observations; discussion with members of the Rediscovery International Board; observations of the community development process, and; my personal journal.

Data Analysis

Initial data analysis would be based upon Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interview 'Development Research Sequence', drawing themes from field notes (including ethnographic observations) whenever time permitted. General themes from each Elder discussion were to be returned to the Elder at our next meeting for validation and as a basis for ongoing discussion. Through involving Elders with rudimentary qualitative conceptualization and analysis I hoped to ensure local cultural traditions were respected and acknowledged, and to reinforce the important role of the Elders in the community. Generalizing the outcomes of the interview and analysis process (and my own field notes), my aim was to then validate the results through their presentation and discussion at community meetings. If and when the local Rediscovery camp organizing group felt it appropriate, the results could then be utilized in the development of a camp curriculum unique to the local area.

Writing Style

The writing of this thesis, like most qualitative research projects, shall be an integral component of the project, contributing to the process of data discovery, analysis and interpretation. Through my writing I do not wish for the process of participatory research to be identified as excessively technical, for one of the true virtues of community-based participatory research approaches is the ability for full involvement by all interested members of a community. Research should not exclude members of a community if its intention is to empower members of that community. Similarly, it is not my intent to portray the challenges of collecting and analyzing the perspective of Elder-informants as easy, for the process is a difficult and time consuming one.

Typically research has a product orientation, whereby the researcher may be striving to ground a theory or to test some pre-formed hypothesis. This project is no different, for the challenge of developing a locally derived wilderness camp curriculum provides a end product to my work. Community based participatory research acknowledges the role of research in community development. Therefore I feel it important to acknowledge the process of such work through my writing.

I have elected to write from a 'here and now' perspective, adopting a 'confessional tale' style of writing as a means for sharing my research journey stories. Henderson (1991: 158) highlights the benefits of such a confessional writing style...

> (The confessional style)...is highly personal and focuses on the researcher's experience in infiltrating, building rapport, and includes the melodrama of the activity. It is autobiographical with an attempt to establish intimacy with the reader concerning what happened in the field and to show how the researcher had empathy and involvement with the informants.

Such a personal style of writing reflects the participatory nature of the research methodology chosen. I am hopeful such a writing approach will also make my words and story accessible for more than just the traditionally-scientific community. Barbara Heather is critical of the language of 'science' as isolating the very insights we strive to share...

> We as sociologists have important insights that we should be sharing with lay people, but we are using the language of 'science' and therefore of isolation. Does this mean producing watered down and less accurate versions of our work?... Would the use of a more open language undermine our membership and blur the boundaries of our identity (as sociologists)? Or would we find that in sharing our understanding was widened and our standing enhanced?
>
> (Heather, 1993: 7)

It is my hope that the reader is able to share and enjoy my journey of research through my personal interactions and insights, the data collected, and the generalizations made. Richardson (1994) suggests many qualitative research pieces are boring and written in a manner that does little to engender a feeling of enthusiasm for completing the challenge of reading. I trust through my personal descriptions and informal style you are able to share and enjoy the journey of Rediscovery I have been fortunate to have traveled over recent years.

CHAPTER 2: REDISCOVERY WILDERNESS CAMPS

So the Raven leaned his great head close to the shell, and with the smooth trickster's tongue that had got him into and out of so many misadventures during his troubled and troublesome existence, he coaxed and cajoled and coerced the little creatures to come out and play in his wonderful, shiny new world. ...So it wasn't long before one, then another of the little shell-dwelling creatures timidly emerged. ...Very strange creatures they were: two legged like the Raven, but there the resemblance ended. They had no glossy feathers, no thrusting beak. Instead of strong wings , they had thin stick-like appendages that waved and fluttered constantly. They were the original Haida's, the first humans.

(Reid and Bringhurst, 1984:28)

First Beginnings

Haida oral tradition suggests the first humans were deviously created by the trickster Raven through sexual connection with a clam shell on a northern beach in the Haida Gwai archipelago many centuries ago. Whilst not in any way as devious, 'Rediscovery' wilderness education camps also had their first beginnings on those same Northern beaches of the Queen Charlotte Islands in Canada's Pacific Northwest.

Author Thom Henley, in his book Rediscovery: Ancient Pathways - New Directions, describes the progress of project Rediscovery from its early beginnings to the late nineteen eighties. The journey begins with Henley's portrayal of his seemingly-destined first meeting with the children of Haida Gwai and the subsequent trial youth camp program that was developed and coordinated in the summer of 1978. The venture required a massive community commitment, and built upon previous attempts by the Haida Band Councils to deal with the many issues facing their youth. The goals for that first camp were threefold... "...to discover the world within oneself, the cultural worlds between people, and the wonders of the natural world around us." (Henley, 1989:18)

The program for that first Rediscovery wilderness camp was reflective of the outdoor leadership experience and the life experiences of staff whom Thom Henley and the balance of the organizing group had mustered. The camp had a strong local flavor, with Haida leaders and Elders encouraged to share their wisdom and skills with the youth. It was promoted as a camp for everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, or degree of societal privilege. Non-Haida youth were certainly welcome and, as Henley (1989: 18) suggests, it was the cross cultural sharing that developed Rediscovery camps into something rather special and unique in the area of outdoor education...

> Moreover, the Haida people began to share their love, their songs, legends, dances, and other traditions with non-native children as if they were children of their own. It was this act of sharing, more than any other factor, which made Rediscovery what it is today.

Today, some 18 years after that first Rediscovery camp, there is a genuine commitment by the people of the Queen Charlotte Islands to continuing their Rediscovery wilderness education program. My conversation with Haida Elder, Ethel Jones, during the 1995 Rediscovery International Conference in Port Hardy, Canada, recognizes the role Rediscovery has played for improving the well-being of Haida youth, and also the role the camp has played in 'strengthening community.' Elder Jones' future commitment to Rediscovery is unconditional...

> There will always be a Rediscovery camp on Haida Gwai for as long as I am alive.
>
> (Personal Communication, May 1995)

Rediscovery Today

From those modest beginnings in the Queen Charlotte Islands has sprouted a network of Rediscovery camps worldwide. The success of Haida Gwai Rediscovery was soon recognized by other communities and tribal groups, particularly in the Pacific Northwest coast region of Canada.

Today Rediscovery programs are coordinated by non-profit organizations and offer locally based experiences in personal, cultural, and environmental awareness. They are developed and coordinated in ways that best fit the uniqueness of the local bioregion and culture. Rediscovery is not about participants returning to their distant pasts, of hunting and gathering and returning to the ways of living of traditional ancestors. Rather, Rediscovery acknowledges that ancient wisdom exists for all peoples, that we all have an ancestry regardless of race.

As Bell suggests (1990:52), the philosophy of Rediscovery clearly is 'human' in nature, and provides any community great latitude for developing a number of locally based programs...

> Rediscovery is about reclaiming the values of community and home, honesty and authenticity, diversity, sustainability and the "deep ecology" of our human state. It is about understanding our place in our cultures and our environments on this living land.

The potential personal, social, and ecological benefits of Rediscovery are wide ranging, but to date little formal investigation has been conducted on current programs. Little has been published about Rediscovery and in an attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of the Rediscovery 'model' I have journeyed through the promotional and organizational material of the Rediscovery International Foundation, as well as Thom Henley's guidebook for outdoor education. I was also privileged to meet Rediscovery Board members, Elders, camp leaders, and youth in attendance at the 1994 and 1995 R.I.F. conferences, and the following insights have been developed predominantly from these written and verbal sources.

The Rediscovery International Foundation

In 1985 the Rediscovery International Foundation (R.I.F.)4 was established to assist with the development of Rediscovery wilderness education camps, especially in those communities where local youth were undergoing some form of crisis. Today the Foundation operates at a number of levels and is the umbrella organization promoting the vision and values of Rediscovery worldwide. Their vision statement provides insight to the direction of Rediscovery camps, reflecting also the direction of that first camp in Haida Gwai...

> Rediscovery draws on the strengths of native traditions to help youth of all ages discover and respect the world within themselves, the cultural worlds between them, and the natural world around them.
>
> (Rediscovery International Foundation, 1991)

R.I.F. has identified a "belief framework" to ensure their organizational vision is fulfilled, and is presented in Figure A. The manner in which the Rediscovery International Foundation has structured their vision and belief framework presents great latitude for communities to develop their own unique program. The Foundation clearly strives for local empowerment, and plays a support - only role for each camp organization to encourage local participation and leadership.

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[4] Additional information on the Rediscovery International Foundation and Rediscovery camps can be obtained from Rediscovery, P.O. Box 1207, Station E, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, V8W 2T6.

FIGURE A: REDISCOVERY INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION, ORGANIZATIONAL BELIEF FRAMEWORK

Rediscovery International Foundation

ORGANIZATIONAL BELIEF FRAMEWORK

® Rediscovery offers a sense of belonging and stewardship to a homeland - a heartland.

® Youth and Elders, natives and non-natives, bridge the gap of generations and divisions between cultures.

® Cross cultural understanding is furthered by drawing on the strengths and traditions of indigenous cultures within an extended family environment.

® Rediscovery promotes spirituality, healthy living, self esteem, leadership skills, individual expression, and personal achievement.

® A flexible approach and innovative activities provide important alternate forms of education.

® Rediscovery furthers harmony within the world community by promoting its vision and values as a living and growing model.

(Rediscovery International Foundation, 1991:9)

There are no specific program elements that must be included in any camp, nor for the name "Rediscovery" to be used. Each camp is able to affiliate themselves to the Foundation for a nominal fee, and this provides opportunity to utilize the Rediscovery liability insurance policy, provided their strict safety and health standards are met. Regardless of the affiliation status of any camp, the Foundations mandate is to assist with the development of locally based wilderness camps and members are available to support any new or existing program. There are also opportunities for camps to send staff to R.I.F. subsidized cultural awareness and outdoor pursuits training programs.

In the spring of each year, typically during the Canadian May long weekend, the Foundation coordinates an International Conference, providing opportunities for the 'gathering of fires' from around the world. In attendance at the 1995 Rediscovery

International Conference in Port Hardy, Canada, were representatives of twenty three established Rediscovery camps from Canada, the United States, New Zealand, and Thailand. In addition, delegates in the process of establishing camps were honored, with more than thirty people taking the opportunity to speak of their community endeavors during the session. Representatives traveled from as far afield as Sweden, Germany, South Africa, Australia, the southern United States, South America, and Thailand. From the diversity of backgrounds and cultures of those attending the 1995 conference and the enthusiasm and pride delegates carried with them, it was very evident that Rediscovery camps are a growing phenomena in the field of outdoor, environmental, and cultural education.

Rediscovery Philosophy

> By drawing from the strength of native traditions, the wisdom of the Elders, a philosophy of respect and love of the land and for each other, and with a focus on the spirituality of all life, Rediscovery emerges today as a new direction for youth camps.
>
> (Henley, 1989:19)

It is the cultural richness inherent in each Rediscovery program that provides an outdoor educational experience like no other (Owitna Gula Rediscovery, 1994; Rediscovery International Foundation, 1991; 1990; Brown, 1990, and; Henley, 1989). Rediscovery promotes native pathways for learning, in the form of traditions, value systems and lifestyles, as the key to our survival as humans and for the survival of our environment. Henley (1989:26) suggests cultural diversity is the key to human survival, just as biological diversity is essential for the future of the natural world, and that "...there is a profound need for all people to accept, respect and cherish our cultural differences." A brochure produced by the Rediscovery International Foundation (1990) highlights the three cornerstones of the organization...

REDISCOVERY IS...
TO DISCOVER THE STRENGTH OF NATIVE TRADITION.
TO DISCOVER THE WISDOM OF THE ELDERS.
TO DISCOVER A PHILOSOPHY OF RESPECT AND LOVE...
FOR NATURE
FOR EACH OTHER
FOR OURSELVES

Rediscovery and Community

The notion of community is an important aspect of Rediscovery camps. As Henley (1995) highlights, some Rediscovery camps are fully integrated and integral to their immediate location, whilst others provide merely a summer diversion for local youth. Regardless, camps typically develop from within an established town or city and are often a microcosm of that social situation. A common thread through the written material on Rediscovery is that the camps themselves are the product of the dedicated love, toil and support of local community members.

Rediscovery Programs and Activities

As noted earlier, Rediscovery programs are initiated and developed within a community, with each camp curriculum typically centered around the specific needs of local youth. Camps are promoted as being for all people, regardless of race, sex, creed, culture, or social background (Henley, 1989; Rediscovery International Foundation, 1991; Brown, 1990). There is no specific Rediscovery curriculum model that camps must follow.

Heiltsuk Elder Frank Brown has produced a "Rediscovery Program Development Guide" for the R.I.F. based upon his experiences with the Heiltsuk Rediscovery Project in Bella Bella, Canada. He suggests the first phase of any Rediscovery pilot project should lie with determining the specific needs of the local community. Possible needs for developing a Rediscovery wilderness camp may include the following...

> Providing a DIVERSION ACTIVITY for youth at risk; COUNSELING youth in crisis; bridging the generation gap between YOUTH and ELDERS; promoting HEALTH and FITNESS in an alcohol / drug free environment; the development of SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY through cooperative activities; the acquisition of survival and outdoor skills, including TRADITIONAL NATIVE TECHNOLOGIES; contributing to a greater sense of PRIDE IN ONES OWN CULTURE AND IN ONES OWN ACCOMPLISHMENTS; providing opportunities for CROSS CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING in a social family context; rekindling an interest in EDUCATION for school drop outs through innovative teaching programs in a natural environment; providing LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS; assisting youth in the transition to adulthood through RITES OF PASSAGE.

(Henley, 1989:262 BOLD not in original)

Henley provides a collection of eighty Rediscovery-appropriate activities, complete with thorough activity descriptions and visual support. The activities are separated into three distinct chapters: "The World Within", "The Cultural Worlds Between", and "The World Around Us", reflecting the integrated, holistic educational focus of Rediscovery. These sections reflect the experiential disciplines of adventure education, cultural education, and ecological education.

Many of the activities described by Henley (1989) have been borrowed from the works of a plethora of outdoor, environmental, and values educators. For example, there are significant contributions from Steve Van Matre and his Earth Education and Acclimatization programs, as well as activities reflecting the work of Joseph Cornell designed to enhance environmental awareness through positive outdoor experiences. Whilst most of the activities presented are not unique to Rediscovery it is obvious Rediscovery programs have shaped many of the activities to better meet their needs.

Considerable creativity is evident in the section entitled "Cultural Worlds Between", where program elements appear to reflect the distinctive native traditions involved with Rediscovery. The real challenge for those assisting to develop a local Rediscovery program appear to be with the identification, understanding and programming of activities unique to the local culture and bioregion. It is these elements that ensure the uniqueness of the Rediscovery movement.

Henley's "Rediscovery" guide provides the developing camp with plenty of activities for infusing fledgling programs, however there is a distinct lack of specific program development or program sequencing guidance baring one paragraph...

> (D.) Schedule daily activities to provide a balance of physical exercise, counseling, quiet introspection, nature appreciation, cultural studies, food growing and gathering, and cooperative group activities.
>
> (Henley, 1989:264)

Little specific direction is provided for the development of a curriculum that will meet those established needs of the local community. One can surmise that Henley has deliberately left that critical phase of program development to those coordinating each program and the communities themselves.

The following sections outline the links between the philosophy and programs of Rediscovery to the body of literature deemed Outdoor, Experiential Education. To reflect the camp activity categories prescribed by Henley I have separated the literature into the potentially - experiential disciplines of Cultural, Environmental, and Adventure Education.

Rediscovery and Experiential Education

Rediscovery programs are promoted as providing first hand learning experiences for participants in natural, wilderness settings. Such 'learning through experience' is not a new phenomena.. As Kraft (1985a) suggests such experiential learning preceded the use of symbolic media by likely millions of years and has been the basis of our formal and informal education. In recent times we have seen emerge 'new' forms of education which include the assimilation of information, education through the use of symbols such as the written word, learning from the experiences of others, and learning by rote memory (Coleman, from Kraft, 1985b). Such 'new' forms of education pervade and dominate our modern, formal educational system. Many experiential educators suggest there is a profound need for incorporating meaningful experiences into education. For example, Kraft suggests the more recent systems of education are not meeting the needs of a large proportion of modern youth...

> ...the immediate reasons for the re-analysis of the role of experience in learning comes from the failure of contemporary schooling to meet the needs of large proportions of the youth. The percentages of failures, of dropouts, pushouts, and alienated youth varies from community to community, but those percentages are significant enough...to prompt educators to take a serious look at what they are doing.
>
> (Kraft, 1985a; 7)

Rediscovery programs serve to answer Kraft's challenge of returning to an educational process more centered upon real life experiences. Programs have already been established in a number of communities where school drop out rates and truancy levels are high. Advocates of an experiential mode of education based upon local peoples' life experiences would suggest Rediscovery has the potential to meet the needs of youth in many communities and that Rediscovery programs may be of value in conjunction with present day schooling. There is room for scholarly investigation on this aspect of Rediscovery.

The Philosophical Foundations of Experiential Education

Drawing from the early work of philosophers of education including Cornelius, Rousseau, Friere, Hahn and Dewey, the body of literature deemed experiential education has centered around the role of meaningful experiences in the educational process. Kraft (1985b; 1990) highlights the range of behavioral and cognitive influences and learning theories that have contributed to the experiential education movement. John Dewey, often regarded as the forefather of experiential education, also provides a philosophical foundation for the movement. In his work Education and Experience, Dewey (1938) highlights the "organic connection" between learning and personal experience as a form of empirical and experimental knowing. Dewey noted that not all experience lead to education, that the quality of the experience dictated what was learned, and that some experiences were in fact miss-educative. To foster physical, intellectual, and moral growth Dewey advocated the principles of continuity of growth, relevant life experiences, and interaction with ones immediate environment. These notions were founded on the idea that growth through any experience must include establishing the necessary conditions for ongoing growth in the future, and must be relevant to ones life experience ...

> Education in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual learner and for the society must be based upon experience -- which is always the life-experience of some individual.
>
> (Dewey, 1938: 89)

For Dewey, education had as a central objective the building of a more democratic society. Similarly Paulo Friere (1972), a Brazilian revolutionary educator and philosopher, emphasized the importance of education that is both relevant to the individual and society as a means of subsequently improving the conditions for the individual and society. Friere voices concern over the potentially oppressive forces inherent in the dominant 'banking' style of much modern education whereby the teacher deposits information into the brains of the students for recall at a later time. Such a "pedagogy of the oppressed", as Friere (1972) suggests, serves to reinforce the stereotypes, political regimes, and assumptions of the dominant group in society, and can lead to the further alienation and marginalisation of minority peoples.

In contrast, Friere highlights the potentially 'liberating' nature of an experience - based education. He promotes a cycle of learning termed a "praxis", an ongoing cycle of experience and reflection by learners on their world. The objective of such praxis-based education is a change in the conditions in which the learner exists resulting in the learners' participation in their own liberation (Friere, 1972). Such liberatory objectives are not just idealism but have been successfully utilized in developing countries to overcome dominant political regimes.

Like Dewey, Friere acknowledges that experience does not always lead to education, suggesting an educational experience is meaningless unless it leads to a liberation of the individual and / or changes within the individual's society. Mao Tse-Tung was influential in promoting community and society widely within China through a progressive, experience based education (Kraft, 1985b), particularly in his formative years of leadership. Mao, like Dewey and Friere, viewed experience as central to growth...

> All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience... human knowledge can in no way be separated from practice... practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge... whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming into contact with it, that is, by living, (practicing) in its environment...practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge...
>
> (Mao, from Kraft, 1985b: 13)

From her review of the plethora of programs deemed "experiential" in nature, Joplin (1981:17) concluded that "...experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education, and it is the reflection process which turns experience into experiential education." Many other experiential learning models have been presented in the literature5 and typically include both an activity or experience component and a debrief or reflective component (Knapp, 1992).

Philosophy in Practice

Considerable discussion and debate has arisen in recent times within the experiential education movement regarding whether experiential education can best be described as a philosophy, a discipline, a method, or a combination of the three. Henley (1989), when discussing the education process occurring during Rediscovery programs, suggests experience is central and provides the platform for a holistic learning approach as it has done for many, many generations. This experiential approach fits clearly with Itin's understanding of experiential education...

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[5] See Kraft R.J. (1985) Towards a Theory of Experiential Learning. [In R.J. Kraft & M Sakofs (Eds.), The Theory of Experiential Education (2nd Edition) Boulder, Association for Experiential Education] for an overview of experiential learning models and theories.

> For me it is a philosophy. That is, it informs a method, (it lays the foundation for a number of methods), is the basis for a discipline (EE is not a discipline in and of itself, but supports several), and contributes to several distinct but related professions (e.g. Adventure, Adult Ed., environmental).
>
> (Itin, 1996, brackets in original)

After years of discourse the Association for Experiential Education has recently defined experiential education, as "... a process through which the learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences" (Gass et al, 1995). With this definition comes a number of key principles...

- Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis.
- Experiences are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results.
- Throughout the experiential learning process the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, and constructing meaning.
- Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully, and / or physically. This involvement produces a perception that the learning task is authentic.
- The results of the learning are personal and form the basis of future experience and learning.
- Relationships are developed and nurtured: learner to self, learner to others, and learner to the world at large.
- The educator and the learner may experience success, failure, adventure, risk taking, and uncertainty, since the outcomes of experience cannot be totally predicted.
- Opportunities are nurtured for learners and educators to explore and examine their own values.
- The educators' primary roles include setting suitable experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, ensuring physical and emotional safety, and facilitating the learning process.
- The educator recognizes and encourages spontaneous opportunities for learning.

- Educators strive to be aware of their biases, judgments, and preconceptions and how they influence the learner.
- The design of the learning experience includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes, and successes.

(Gass et al, 1995:1)

Henley (1989) presents a variety of color photographs, activity descriptions and graphic text suggesting Rediscovery is indeed an education program with experiences central to the learning process. Many of these experiences occur in a wilderness learning environment and have the potential for fostering meaningful personal, social, cultural, and ecological growth. However, no formal investigation into the experiential learning process of Rediscovery programs has been undertaken. Whilst it is apparent some of the important 'takeaways' from the Rediscovery experience may be the individual and social liberatory ideals promoted by Dewey, Friere, and other experiential educators there is both an opportunity and a need for investigation of this aspect of existing Rediscovery Wilderness camps. It is obvious from the characteristics of experiential education presented in the literature that the facilitators of an experiential program require a considerable array of educational and people-related skills for experiences to be deemed experiential. One can only assume those Rediscovery program staff operating in camps worldwide have the specific skills to be considered experiential educators.

Rediscovery and Cultural Education
(The strength of Native traditions)

It is the cultural elements of distinctive native nations that make Rediscovery a uniquely different journey experience for participants than those outdoor experiences typically offered in mainstream youth camp settings (Henley, 1989; Rediscovery International Foundation, 1991). Rediscovery is promoted as being for native AND non-native people, and programs reflect the diversity of both the cultural and bioregional elements of distinctive aboriginal groups. Reference to cultural and cross-cultural education permeates the Rediscovery literature. Henley (1989: 88) writes:

> Rediscovery focuses on the sensitivity to, and total immersion in, different cultures. The renewed pride in cultural identity and skills that native youth experience on Rediscovery are easily matched by the sense of cross cultural understanding experienced by non-natives.

Similar themes are promoted by the Rediscovery International Foundation (1991: 3)...

> It (Rediscovery) takes natives and non-natives on a journey to recreate the vitality of the past, the excitement of the present, and inspires them to reach with a sense of empowerment toward the future.

There are a number of emergent and integrated themes contributing to an enhanced cross cultural understanding for Rediscovery participants and staff. These are outlined below...

Wisdom of the Elders

Elders are promoted as being of great importance to existing Rediscovery programs. These Elders are not necessarily those who are senior in years but rather are those respected and cherished individuals who have amassed considerable experience, knowledge and wisdom, who have become excellent role models, and who have contributed something for the good of others (Lusty, 1993). They are the persons who know what is important in life and who can apply such knowledge to their own lives, which Akan (1990: 212) terms "good walking and good talking." The ability to walk and talk with cultural authority as an Elder takes place over a considerable accumulation of years. Some Elders may have commenced a traditional learning path at an early age or had profound learning experiences (Lusty, 1993) concentrated over a shorter time span meaning they become Elders at a younger age. Lusty also highlights that an acknowledged spiritual leader, a traditional healer, and / or a pipe holder may not necessarily also be an Elder in the traditional sense.

Traditionally Elders have held considerable responsibility for the education of their youth. Alfred Manitopeyes, a Saulteaux Elder interviewed by Akan (1990), views the primary objective of traditional native education to be the enriching of spiritual well-being. Oral traditions and the learning experiences of Elders appear very important for the mind and the spirit...

> Not to have a spiritual foundation is not to have a good mind. Youth need to hear about their stories and myths, and the experiences of Elders and parents; and to learn about the importance of ceremony and ritual in life.
>
> (Akan, 1990,214)

There is a high regard given to spirituality in traditional education and great responsibility is placed upon Elders, teachers and parents to ensure spiritual well-being of native youth. Elder Manitopayes provides clear directives in terms of educational directions and outcomes for the educators of native youth today...

> It is our responsibility as parents, Elders, and teachers to educate youth and to tell them the stories, experiences, strengths, and hopes so that they will wish to have an ideal relationship to the land, our ancestors and other living things.
>
> (Akan, 1990: 209)

Couture (1991) writes of the reemergence of Native Elders today in the wake of human and planetary crisis, as both natives and non natives seek counsel, healing, and inspiration whilst looking towards the 'native way' for the future survival of humans and 'mother earth'. Such a heightened role for Elders today comes not too many years after the sharing of native wisdom and spiritual practices was banned by legislation and the church throughout much of North America (Couture, 1991; Highwater, 1981; Kellough, 1980). It seems Elders today face many inner tensions as their once denounced traditional values and ways are now in high demand, especially in light of the need for such values and practices to be dynamic to cope with a rapidly changing world.

Oral Traditions

A traditional native philosophy of education appears to be that of a life long journey (Akan, 1990; Lightning, 1992; Couture, 1991). Oral traditions have apparently provided the foundation for such a journey over thousands of years. Such traditions may include the sharing of creation stories, family stories, sacred stories, myths, and life experiences in an orator - listener, teacher - learner, relationship.

One of the common goals for such a traditional journey is promoted by Archibald (1990:72) as "... harmony and a mutualistic balance among the animal/human kingdom, elements of nature, and the spiritual world". It appears traditional education is a holistic and personal journey of developing a relationship between oneself, the land, and the cosmos. Apparently such a holistic style of learning and the transfer of such learning in an experiential manner has for a great number of years been rooted in oral tradition.

Cruickshank (1987, 1977) promotes oral traditions as not only sharing aspects of the past but also laying a foundation and reference for thinking about the future. She highlights the importance that six women Elders in the Yukon Territory have placed upon ensuring their stories were recorded in a written format, thus ensuring their teachings would provide a foundation for youth in the years ahead.

Lightning (1992: 219) reinforces the importance given by Elders to traditional education by relating how spirituality is important not only for the survival of indigenous people but for all of humanity...

> It would seem that the Elders of North American cultures have something that they want us to know for our survival not only physically, but more importantly spiritually as well.

There appears constant pressure for many native peoples' to accept and to adapt to life as westerners. The resulting confusion is often manifested in native youth (Archibald, 1990) as they are presented with often-conflicting traditional / modern viewpoints. Archibald suggests a strengthening of oralty is necessary to cope with this pressure and that westerners must better accept the intellectual, social and spiritual benefits of oralty if all people are to live in relative harmony. It appears Rediscovery wilderness camps may be an appropriate vehicle for such cross-cultural sharing and understanding.

Saulteaux Elder Manitopayes presents the importance of oral traditions for survival and addresses the need to resist the demise of spirituality...

> The creation myths, sacred stories, ceremonies, and rituals remind us that the earth must survive if we are to survive; but mostly they ground us in a profoundly meaningful way that has more to do with our ancestors.
>
> (Akan, 1990, 212)

In addition, Elder Manitopayes believes indigenous cultures have valuable lessons for western cultures. Akan (1990,1) portrays the Elders vision of a "mutual cultural trade" where native youth are educated in the western sense, in the hope that they are able to subtly educate their teachers in the process.

Teaching through oral traditions appears an extremely complex genre. Elders demonstrate tremendous skills of observation, listening ability, wisdom, memory recall, and the perception of learner needs. These considerable skills are highlighted by Lightning (1992), and are included to reinforce the complexity of 'story' and the special oratory skills required of the Elders...

> The way to interpret those stories has never been clear to the literate, academic community until recently. The stories are not just "texts", or

> narratives that deal with sequences of events in a linear progression of events.
>
> There are several classes of stories. For example, there are "sacred" stories as opposed to "historical" stories, and traditionally it has taken 40 years or so of apprenticeship for an individual to work to gain the authority to tell the sacred class of story. That length of time is not required just to learn the texts of the stories, nor how to perform them. It takes that long to acquire the principles for interpretation of the stories.
>
> There is a "surface" story: the text, and the things one has to know about the performance of it for others. The stories are metaphoric, but there are several levels of metaphor involved. The text, combined with the performance, contains a "key" or a "clue" to unlock the metaphor. When the hearer has that story, and knows the narrative sequence of it, there is another story contained within that story, like a completely different embedded or implicit text.
>
> (Lightning, 1992, 229)

Lightning also provides an inkling to the level of expertise one must have to sharing a story, again sharing the words of Elder Wapaskwan...

> A person who speaks the "high" version of the language, knows the principles for "unfolding" the stories, and has some degree of skill in construction and telling such stories. There are checks for validity of the story at each level and between levels. The stories have to fit, precisely, at all levels, to be coherent. At some levels there is very explicit and precise spatial and temporal information.
>
> (Lightning, 1992, 229 - 230)

Wapaskwan goes on to share a story of the trickster Crow, and then refers to some of the narrative sequence. He outlines the complexity of the teachings in the story as multiple layers of embedded text and clues for their interpretation can be exposed over a long period of time...

> At one level, that sequence of the story contains a very precise topological description of a stretch of the Missouri River and the basin around it, just south of its confluence with the Yellowstone. At another level, that same sequence contains a very precise set of principles for relationships between specific kin. A hearer isn't meant to understand the story at all levels, immediately. It is if it unfolds.
>
> (Lightning, 1992, 230)

From Wapaskwan's words it is not surprising Sheridan (1994: 82) calls for a reorientation of environmental education. He promotes the medium of oral traditions for grounding learners in a geographical 'place', through a holistic "integration" of indigenous ecological perspectives...

> Integration: ...recognition that a component is an integral part of the whole: First Nations' perspectives on the environment must be integral to North American environmental education because without those perspectives we ignore tens of thousands of years of development of an environmental ethic that is specific to the places in which we live. The second meaning (of integration) respects the integrity of First Nations' authoritative principles, without appropriation, romanticisation, or alienation -- that is, the recognition of First Nations' environmental thought on its own terms.

However, the late Linda Akan, a scholarly educator from the Saulteaux Nation, provides us a warning. Akan, with formal teaching qualifications and University level teaching experience, shared that she did not meet the standards for being a teacher in the traditional Saulteaux sense. This admission suggests the sharing of oral histories, traditional living skills, and ceremonial activities in educational contexts may not be appropriate unless traditionally skilled educators can be found and utilized in Rediscovery programs..

Rediscovery presents an opportunity to better understand the role of oral tradition in traditional native education, although questions abound from the insights of Wapaskwan, Sheridan, and Akan...

- Have the special oratory skills shared by Wapaskwan been lost by traditional native educators?
- Can Elders with these special skills be located and encouraged to participate in the Rediscovery experience?
- Is it appropriate to have those without traditional educational expertise sharing oral traditions in the Rediscovery process?
- Will youth have the listener skills to understand the stories presented in Rediscovery should skilled traditional educators be available?
- Can learning from oral traditions occur in the short time frame in which Rediscovery camps typically operate?

I am also left wondering where outsiders stand as educators in the Rediscovery model, particularly with the required expertise necessary for sharing traditional teachings. There is no discussion in the literature on the role of 'outsiders' as leaders in the Rediscovery process. It does seem apparent one would require an awareness of and sensitivity to local protocols, regardless of their educational background and expertise.

The Importance of Protocols

First Nation protocols are, to an outsider at least, rather complex cultural rituals established through tradition. I can at best provide a summary by Lightning (1992: 216) for an aboriginal perspective...

> That term, protocol, refers to any one of a number of culturally ordained actions and statements established by ancient tradition, that an individual completes to establish a relationship with another person to whom the individual wishes to make a request. The protocols differ according to the nature of the request and the nature of the individuals involved.

The 'learning' of protocol appears to take place over considerable periods of observation and understanding. Protocol gives a person the authority to share a particular story, event, ceremonial activity, or other culturally specific activity. Protocols are also those actions, rituals, or statements that reflect 'the way' of 'walking and talking' with respect.

Protocols appear vitally important for Rediscovery to present activities in a culturally appropriate manner. It is perhaps for this reason alone the Rediscovery International Board are so suggestive of local Elder input to the process. Protocols provide Rediscovery with a platform of authenticity and ensuring activities are coordinated in an appropriate cultural context. ..

> Rediscovery camps serve the needs of native as well as non-native youth within an authentic cultural context. These are not the standard summer camps where totem poles are propped in front of tipi's as part of Indian lore. Any Rediscovery participant could tell you that such misrepresentations are as ridiculous as displaying the Eiffel Tower in front of the Taj Mahal. Cultural authenticity is central to the Rediscovery experience.
>
> (Henley, 1989: 19)

As Sheridan (1995) points out one cannot share traditional teachings or try to explain cosmological principles without the appropriate validation from the culture to whom the teachings apply. It is assumed protocols are central to this appropriateness. When native ideas and practices are presented without the appropriate cultural authority they are said to be miss-appropriated.

It appears an individual sharing such cultural elements without the use of the appropriate protocols or cultural authority will find the meaning from such teachings are quickly dissolved. It can only be assumed local people involved in a Rediscovery program will have an awareness to local ways of doing things, and in a culturally appropriate manner. No mention is made in the Rediscovery literature on the role or effectiveness of outsiders presenting activities incorporating local protocols.

Cultural Authenticity

For many years non-native outdoor educators have attempted to adopt aspects of an aboriginal land ethic to outdoor education through the incorporation of indigenous ecological wisdom and practice. Lead initially by the Boy Scout movement, Indian lore such as traditional living skills and traditional ecological thought is now integral to the practice of outdoor education (Sheridan, 1994).

Such inclusion of indigenous perspectives into recent education programs has not occurred without cost. There are many, both native and non native, who have spoken out against such practices of appropriation and integration of indigenous ecological knowledge to outdoor education (Hall, 1992; Couch, 1992; Horwood, 1994; Sheridan, 1994). In particular, Sheridan highlights the many culturally - trivializing issues prevalent in outdoor educational practices today. I shall do no more than share an abridged version of Sheridan's descriptions to better explain these issues...

> **Authority:** In "cultural" terms, an individual cannot purport to represent teachings or to explain cosmological principles without the validation from the cultures to whom the teachings describe...
>
> **Appropriation:** When First Nations premises, ideas, practices, and so forth, are represented without authority, they can be said to be (mis)appropriated...
>
> **Alienation:** Disjunction and separation between First Nations and others. That is, the indigenous notions presented in environmental education (e.g., the Interconnectedness of all things) has become dissociated, thus alienated, from First Nations environmental knowledge. Traditional ecological knowledge has been separated from an indigenous ethos, and appropriated in a romantic fashion by the environmental education movement.

(Sheridan, 1994, 81-82)

Horwood (1994) suggests the widespread inclusion of native approaches to outdoor education practices is due principally to three factors: "...an ignorance and misunderstanding of traditional native ceremonies; a romantic tendency of idealization to native American cultures, and; a profound need of non natives to connect more authentically with the land" (Horwood 1994,13). Perhaps the greatest educational potential of Rediscovery is with providing opportunities for native and non-native youth to better understand the role and importance of traditional ceremonies, to diminish the romanticism surrounding native people and their relationship with the land, and to enhance the connection of all involved with their surroundings.

Rediscovery and Adventure Education
(Respect and Love for Others and Ourselves)

Rediscovery programs may include activities that are generally regarded as adventurous, such as canoeing, overnight camping, hiking, and multi-day expeditions. However Adventure is a much broader concept than popularly regarded, and Priest (1990) suggests any activity where the outcome is uncertain, through one or more pieces of crucial information being missing or unknown can be regarded as Adventure.

Education incorporating adventure is the intentional use of such uncertainty in natural or simulated settings to foster change for participants. Priest (1990:114) suggests such education is programmed on the notion that "...change may take place in groups and individuals from direct and purposeful exposure to Challenge, High Adventure, and New Growth Experiences."

The process of accomplishing adventure education tasks typically involves problem solving, decision making, and / or judgment (Priest, 1986; 1990) leading to 'interpersonal' and / or 'intrapersonal' growth and change. 'Interpersonal' growth refers to how people get along in a group of two or more people, and outcomes may include an enhanced level of communication, co-operation, trust, and leadership ability. 'Intrapersonal' growth relates to how individuals get along with themselves, and outcomes of adventure education may include an enhanced self confidence, self efficacy, spirituality, and self-concept (Ewert, 1989; Priest, 1990; Havens et al, 1992).

Walsh and Golins (1975) investigated the Outward Bound experience, an organization popularly attributed to the early development of adventure education through the philosophy and influence of Kurt Hahn. They suggested that the learner is exposed to an experience in a unique physical and social environment and that through the decision making process required for successful completion of the task the learner is not only fully engaged but able to feel the uncertainty integral to the task. Social support combined with opportunities for shared and internal reflection upon the task then provides opportunities for reconstructing the experience and feeling good about the decision making process. This dynamic process Walsh and Golins suggest leads to empowerment of the individual and / or the group, even if the task may have been initially viewed as a negative or unsuccessful experience.

A number of criteria essential for an adventure to be educative were highlighted by Walsh and Golins, including: 1) the experience must be deliberately programmed and sequenced to provide a growth experience, 2) the experience must be concrete and real, 3) the experience must be realistic, manageable, and achievable, 4) the experience must have real consequences where the participant lives to experience the positive or negative repercussions of the decisions made, and 5) the experience should combine elements of physical, emotional, and intellectual challenge in a holistic and integrated fashion.

The transfer of learning from the adventure situation to life beyond the experience has received considerable attention by theorists over recent years, as educators have recognized an experience in one context will not automatically transfer to another situation. As an example, when leading an adventurous activity like a rock climbing experience up a cliff face one cannot assume the learner will recognize the enhanced confidence they may have gained through successfully completing the challenge nor that the participant can use such an enhancement in their confidence to better cope in meeting the challenge of a job interview.

By providing opportunities for various forms of processing the adventure experience, educators appear able to assist with the retention and transfer of learning (Proudman, 1992; Van Matre, 1990; Gass, 1985; Knapp, 1992a; Bacon, 1983). No specific information is provided in the Rediscovery literature on how to 'process' the Rediscovery experience nor to 'transfer' any learning experiences from a Rediscovery program to everyday lives. The Haida Gwaii program does offer some insight however to providing program follow-up activities, which may assist with transfer...

> The Haida Elders also recognized the need for effective follow-up and ongoing counseling after participants return home. To meet this need in the community of Masset, Elders open up their homes to young

> people during the winter months, treating the children as their own. In their kitchens and living rooms, they may teach bark basketry, button blanket making, and dance... At present, much development is needed for follow-up programs, but there's no shortage of good community generated ideas...
>
> (Henley, 1989:46-47)

Henley highlights many Rediscovery activities and experiences potentially challenging to youth, and which present opportunities for high adventure and new growth experiences in an outdoor setting. The following are identified elements of the Rediscovery experience with the potential for education through adventure. All elements are generalizations from Henley's (1989) text and his personal experience in many of the Rediscovery camps currently operating. What is not outlined is how such camp activities are selected, programmed, sequenced, facilitated, or transferred to everyday situations. There is scope for scholarly investigation into all of the following components of Rediscovery relative to adventure education...

Extended Family:

Rediscovery camps typically operate as an extended family, with the number of program participants kept low. Supporting staff may range from the camp Elders to young children, resulting in three and sometimes four generations of people in the camp environment. Ratios of participating students to their leaders are kept low to facilitate guidance and counseling in a supportive and psychologically and physically safe environment. Elders are available for special counseling and informal talks with participants.

Sharing, Speaking out:

Rediscovery has identified informal program moments as important to encourage youth to share their thoughts, feelings, and concerns with program counselors, Elders, and each other. Henley (1989: 39) highlights the potential of spending time in natural spaces for this personal and communal sharing, and the potential development of support networks beyond the camp experience...

> Nature acts as a catalyst for self-expression, and is the ideal place to share thoughts with others. Once a rapport has been established between people, and a young person realizes that what he or she feels is important, that sense of self worth and trust in others will carry back to the community. If they are ever in serious need, hopefully they will remember there are people who care and who will listen.

Personal Achievement:

The promoted experiential nature of Rediscovery activities, the informal-ness of the learning environment, and the support network of guides, Elders and fellow campers, provides opportunity for the learning of new skills and growth through positive experiences in different ways from the typical classroom setting. Challenging activities, such as the twenty four hour solo, and success with any number of skills and experiences may contribute to ones interpersonal growth. Rediscovery staff strive to ensure individual achievements are recognized and honored by camp personnel. Individuals may have opportunity, perhaps through quiet times of introspection in the program, to feel good about themselves after being successful with a particular challenge, activity or interaction.

Healthy Living:

Rediscovery camps are structured to ensure an active living state for participants in a conducive natural environment. Morning activities and exercise, adventure activities and pursuits, healthy foods, and an alcohol and drug free learning environment are likely activities for all Rediscovery camps. Some programs today are also promoting a cigarette free environment(Henley, 1989). Participants may recognize that enjoyable, educational experiences can occur without the influence of unhealthy substances, and that there are adventure alternatives to getting high through substance abuse. These healthy living experiences may contribute to longer term lifestyle choices. Physical and emotional safety is of paramount importance in all Rediscovery camps, with all affiliated camps adhering to strict safety and health guidelines. These factors all seek to contribute to new growth experiences in a safe, healthy, trusting, and supportive environment.

Leadership Skills:

As with many adventure challenges in a group situation, Rediscovery program activities provide opportunities for participants to take the lead at various times. It seems the leaders who emerge from the camp experience may be individuals who do not excel in traditional learning environments. One of the developments of Rediscovery camps during recent years is that participants return to camps for further experiences, then as junior guides, and later as full camp leaders or counselors. Rediscovery International promotes this development, supporting local junior staff to attend their training programs. Ultimately it is hoped these Rediscovery graduates will be the camp directors and coordinators of the future. One such outcome emerging today is the development of the Haida Gwai Watchmen in the Queen Charlotte islands providing a formal guiding service for tourists and acting as stewards of local heritage sites throughout the islands.

Rediscovery and Environmental Education
(Respect and Love For Nature)

The field of environmental education is as diverse today as it is complex. Ecological learning opportunities are an important aspect of any Rediscovery program and the 'wilderness' environment of most camps present many magical opportunities for participants to make strong personal connections with their natural surroundings. These experiences will likely occur in both structured and unstructured times of a camp. Priest (1986; 1990) has attempted to summarize the formal side of the environmental education discipline through his adventure education lens by identifying two key environmental education relationships: Ekistic and Ecosystemic. According to Priest (1986: 14) 'ecosystemic' relationships relate to learning of the dynamics and interdependence of all parts of an ecosystem, such as "how energy is transmitted through a food web, how nature heals through succession processes after a forest fire, and how some organisms depend upon other organisms to survive." 'Ekistic' relationships refer to the interaction between people and their surroundings, such as "...how humans impact on natural resources and how that might have a reciprocal effect, with the quality of the land influencing the quality of society's life."

Others have attempted a global issues-based approach to environmental education, focusing upon popular issues such as global warming, overpopulation, and clear-cutting tropical rain forests. These lessons have regularly occurred with participants sitting in classrooms and separated from the issues under investigation, promoting concern from critical educators who believe such abstract environmental teachings are not working. Raffan (1990) suggests such environmental education approaches may be "...guilty of selectively highlighting cognition and of undervaluing - or ignoring - other ways of knowing." He suggests environmental educators, particularly in North American schools and environmental education centers, are teaching a 'failed curriculum' centered around information out of an environmental context.

Such views have been endorsed by the Institute for Earth Education, an organization that has grown from Steve Van Matre's "Acclimatization" and "Acclimatizing" work of the 1970's and 80's. The Institute promotes seven key reasons why environmental education has failed and as Van Matre himself suggests (1990:47), "...earth education is not environmental education, it is an alternative to it." He suggests that learners must be "immersed in the sights and sounds and smells of our richly textured natural systems and communities." (1990:46) and that the major ecological understandings and natural processes can only be understood with passion through activities that are both "hands on" and "minds on" (1990:87).

Rediscovery programs have adapted a number of Acclimatization and Earth Education activities to suit their environmental awareness and education needs. These activities are certainly grounded in local experiences, as Henley (1989: 136) outlines...

> "Rediscovery recognizes that not all knowledge is taught in the same school. Nature itself provides the best university for learning, but often our senses must be reawakened first. By teaching environmental principles within an experiential framework, Rediscovery not only rekindles a childlike sense of wonder in the natural world, it allows for a much deeper understanding of it."

Hines and others (1987:1), after conducting a meta-analysis of environmental education program research, suggest the ultimate goal of environmental education today must be the development of an ecologically aware, responsible, and active citizenry. That is, for education to be environmental it must involve students being actively involved in the preservation of their wider environment, through becoming more knowledgeable about their local ecology and the subsequent problems or threats to it AND learning ways to solve those immediate problems or issues AND actively working together in the resolution of the issues.

Most outdoor education programs such as Rediscovery have some form of ecological objective, however a reality is that unless there has been deliberate programmed opportunities for positive action for the environment it is unlikely those programs would meet the primary objective of the environmental education discipline. Rediscovery has certainly made efforts to go that extra step, making many inroads to fostering responsible, active citizens over the past few years. As programs have developed and Rediscovery participants gained a deeper understanding of their surroundings there has come an awakening to some of the issues impacting upon those very surroundings. One profound example is the influence of Haida Gwaii Rediscovery and its contribution to the establishment of the Gwaii Hanas National Park Reserve. Other examples include Stein Rediscovery's efforts with protecting an area of forest near their camp in British Columbia's Stein Valley, and a developing camp in Prince George, British Columbia, having recently contributed to protecting a watershed from logging activity in order to develop a youth camp in the area.

These developments some would regard as environmental activism, and suggest Rediscovery may be eco-politically motivated. Decisions to become environmentally active are made by the people involved in the camps and appear to be based upon the influences of resource harvesting practices upon the Rediscovery camps themselves. Such decisions in the purest sense appear to result from the community self determinism and participants' attachment to natural areas developed through a Rediscovery initiative. However, as with many aspects of the Rediscovery movement, little insight is provided from the limited written material on Rediscovery to determine the ecological - political motivations of Rediscovery leaders or participants. There is scope for scholarly investigation on this aspect.

Rediscovery and Bioregionalism

Rediscovery has been promoted as providing programs that are unique to the local culture and bioregion (Bell, 1990; Henley, 1989). The term 'bioregion' denotes all life (biota) within a physical or geographic area and a bioregion is defined by natural boundaries (such as a river watersheds, vegetation patterns and distinctive terrain) rather than political division. Bioregionalism is the study of how humans relate with and live within their bioregion, and accentuates the relationship of people to the place they live. Bioregionalism provides opportunity for local people to celebrate their distinctive local culture, to acknowledge and appreciate their local bio-diversity, to become more regionally self-sufficient, and to foster ways of conserving rather than exploiting local natural assets (Andrus et al, 1990). Again, there is scope for investigating the bioregional nature of Rediscovery wilderness camps.

Homeland, Heartland: A sense of place

The most important aspect of any Rediscovery program is the interaction of participants with the land (Henley, 1989). Award winning geneticist, television host, environmentalist, and honorary Stein Rediscovery Elder, Dr. David Suzuki, provides insight into the importance of land within the concept of Rediscovery, and for native peoples in general...

> North America, to the native people living here, is more than simply a place, a piece of turf. Land embodies culture, history, and the remains of distant ancestors. Land is the source of all life and the basis of identity. Land is sacred. An overriding sense in aboriginal perceptions

> is that of gratitude for natures bounty and beauty. Gratitude -- and respect.
>
> (Henley, 1989:11)

Wilderness provides a home for Rediscovery, and the relationship between the land and participants provides for Rediscovery learning experiences. As participants (and likely staff) are encouraged to understand and appreciate their surroundings, through immersion in the variety of programmed activities, comes the potential for affective growth toward the wilderness. Participants are encouraged to live with and to respect other living things in their wilderness home (Bell, 1990; Henley, 1989), yet it remains unclear exactly 'how' Rediscovery promotes such a 'home' concept through its programs.

Story as Environmental Education

Through his own investigation to teaching approaches in environmental education, Sheridan (1994) points to the neglected role of 'place' in the construction of meaning in the discipline. He highlights the predominant focus of environmental educators being with the creation, organization, and subsequent segmentation of information for presentation out of an environmental context. Such a process, as Sheridan suggests, deems the learner separate from nature, whereas the understanding that 'self is a part of nature' brings a necessary sense of responsibility and action. Sheridan (1994: 5) calls for a reorientation of environmental education, to utilizing the native tradition of storytelling as a means of connecting students to local places and with 'self' as part of nature...

> I look to storytelling as a curricular practice that might provide an organizational logic for information about the environment, but which has us as humans acting in, not on, environments. ...Being referential to local and specific place is therefore a fundamental element of good storytelling for environmental education.

Rediscovery programs typically include oral traditions, and may provide opportunity for grounding students with educational experiences in local places, but unfortunately little reference is made to the specific role of story in Rediscovery programs for grounding participants' 'self' as a part of nature in a specific locale.

Rediscovery and Deep Ecology

The notion of humans in nature and not above it is one of the fundamental principles of the deep ecological movement. Deep Ecology first developed from Norwegian mountaineer and philosopher Arne Naess' article "The Shallow and the

Deep, Long Range Ecology Movement" (1972), and has grown, in particular, through the works of sociologist Bill Devall and philosopher George Sessions. Deep ecology challenges the reform environmentalism of the 1970's and 1980's, suggesting that a transformation of consciousness and world-view is required for long term ecological survival rather than continuing with the ineffective 'technological fixes' of past decades.

The Deep Ecology movement has drawn, in part, from the world-views of primal cultures. Regular reference is made by Henley (1989: 26-27) of Rediscovery's inclusion of native perspectives towards the environment, and to the value of adapting some of these perspectives for humankind...

> It is not only native knowledge of the land that directly benefits the rest of humanity, but native treatment of the land. Sustainable development in its truest form was the guiding principle of indigenous cultures long before it became a coined term by a United Nations commission and a blueprint for global survival. One of the founders of Heiltsuk Rediscovery, Frank Brown, speaks of this guiding principle: "Rediscovery's foundation is based on indigenous cultures' harmonious relationship with the environment. These values are a gift, not to be taken lightly, but are shared in the hopes that they will be used as guidance in this time of unconscionable resource exploitation. This is necessary to ensure our existence in this world.

Deep Ecology promotes an alternative way of viewing the earth and its inhabitants, with the focus from within rather than as humans separate and distinct from other beings. Deep ecology acknowledges the 'intrinsic worth' of our animate and inanimate community; the worth of the non-human world independent of its value to humans. Essentially intrinsic worth challenges humans to forget about placing economic values upon their surroundings and to recognize the independent and community worth of animate and inanimate members of any natural community.

It seems apparent Rediscovery may offer opportunity for participants to critically examine their existence in relation to other life forms - both animate and inanimate - and may provide practical application of some of the deep ecological guiding principles. Again, the literature provides insufficient evidence to determine the comprehensiveness of deep ecological practicalities within Rediscovery programs and calls for further investigation.

Living From The Land

Whilst some foods are typically purchased and transported to Rediscovery camps, the procurement of food is as much a part of the environmental education program as more formal environmental awareness activities (Henley, 1989). Students are encouraged to participate in fishing, hunting, trapping, gardening, and other food collection activities. The style of food gathering depends entirely upon the location of the camp, and students are provided insight to traditional food hunting and gathering methods specific to the local area.

Procurement activities provide an alternate perspective of the natural world around camp and provides the potential for important connection to the circle of life and growth. The ethics of such food collection are potential lessons for participants, as there are opportunities for showing respect to the animal or plant being harvested, and for sharing of the responsibilities humans have for maintaining the integrity of the local ecosphere. Such food procurement activity hints at Rediscovery demonstrating a 'deeper' connection to local places, but such a connection is again not fully explored in the literature.

Summary

Rediscovery camps are coordinated by non-profit organizations, are for native and non- native youth, and provide locally based experiences in personal, cultural, and environmental awareness. Camp activities are presented in a holistic manner and appear to fit under the umbrella of experiential education. Activities could be segregated to the disciplines of adventure education, cultural education, and environmental education, but programs appear to operate in a more holistic fashion. Each camp provides a program designed to meet the needs of the youth of the areas, and incorporates educational experiences particular, and often unique, to the local bioregion. Camp staff are predominantly local people, with efforts given to ensure native and non-native Elders are a part of each Rediscovery leadership team.

Australian academic and Aboriginal researchers in the Ganma Education Participatory Research Project (Marika et al, 1989) used the metaphor of an estuary between fresh water and salt water to describe the integration of the Western and Aboriginal perspective on education. In their model foam on the surface water of the lagoon represented Ganma, or where innovative programs of education occurred. The Ganma foam was created by the circulation and integration of the coastal salt water with the inland fresh waters and represented a unique blending of modern and traditional approaches to education

Applying the estuary metaphor to the Pacific west-coast of North America, where the majority of Rediscovery camps have established themselves, one could suggest Rediscovery is the place where rivers and fjords meet, where fresh water meets salt, where mountains and coastline converge. Rediscovery offers participants an opportunity to swim in the converging waters and ongoing opportunities for growth and change. In these areas comes the integration of the modern world with the traditions of the past, and a richness as the two worlds meet. Rediscovery supports youth with those traditions, skills, values, knowledge, and attitudes held by their ancestors, regardless of race.

There are, however, many aspects of Rediscovery worthy of investigation and many unanswered questions, both philosophical and pragmatic. There has been little published about Rediscovery, and no scholarly research appears to have been conducted on aspects of camps that are currently in operation. For communities interested in establishing a Rediscovery style camp initiative there is written material available from the Rediscovery International Foundation. Unfortunately little specific information relates to programming potential camp activities into specifically designed programs that will suit the needs of local people. Activities highlighted by Henley (1989) are not specific to Rediscovery and few insights are provided regarding incorporating local and traditional cultural styles of teaching into Rediscovery camp programs. There is also little insight to the specific roles of community Elders in the Rediscovery process nor to the pedagogical manner in which they or other camp staff may teach camp elements. Little mention is provided to the role of oral traditions and storytelling in the Rediscovery process, despite oral tradition appearing to play an important role in traditional native education.

Rediscovery camps are promoted as providing camp experiences in an 'authentic cultural context', yet there is little mention of the appropriateness of non-native people leading camp program elements or incorporating traditional native ceremonies and traditions into programs. One is left questioning the appropriateness of ceremony, ritual, and oral traditions in a potentially-experiential education program such as Rediscovery.

Similarly, little mention is made of the role of Rediscovery in community development or extension and no clear perspective is provided on what constitutes community in a native sense. The theoretical grounding of experiential education suggests a program such as Rediscovery, which incorporates locally-based experiences and at least some local knowledge, has an important role in liberating 'community' and individuals within a community. There are important principles from the literature that may assist a wilderness experience in becoming an experiential-educational program, but there is no evidence to suggest that Rediscovery is indeed playing a role in community growth and development. Similarly, whilst adventure pursuits, environmental activities, and cultural activities are components of a typical Rediscovery camp, there is no evidence to suggest how the activities should be structured in a manner and learning strategy that would maximize opportunities for personal, social, and ecological growth.

The journey of assisting a small northern community establish their own Rediscovery-style wilderness education program has provided me with the opportunity of investigating each of these aspects, as well as contributing to the wider education of the community. My journey of investigating a local 'Rediscovery' is presented and discussed throughout the remainder of this document.

RESULTS

CHAPTER 3: SIX SEASONS OF REDISCOVERY

For the Woodland Cree people of Northern Saskatchewan there are traditionally six distinctive seasons of the year. As promoted by the Education Branch of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (1985) the seasons are:

Tukwakin (September / October) = Fall
Mikiskaw (November / December) = Freeze Up
Pipon = Winter
Mithoskumin = Break Up
Sekwun (March / April) = Spring
Nepin = Summer

The concept of six seasons in a year suggests the Woodland Cree of Northern Saskatchewan may have traditionally lived with a more intimate understanding and awareness of their surroundings than their westernized contemporaries. Their different reality for the seasons of the year was derived from specific, locally derived knowledge systems.

My challenge with this project was to assist the people of a northern Alberta community establish a wilderness education program for their youth, and to develop a 'local' curriculum based upon what the Elders of the community felt were important for youth to know and appreciate. It was important my own educational experience and perspective did not cloud this process and that 'locally derived knowledge' be validated. I strove to expose local world-views and thought, especially those differing significantly from my own. To discover, acknowledge and accept local knowledge was vitally important to the process of developing a local camp program. This special challenge divorced me for some eighteen months, or six seasons, from my western way of thinking.

This chapter provides a chronological overview of my journey of Rediscovery, including the critical incidents, interviews, discussions, and observations that have contributed to the development of a locally derived

Rediscovery camp curriculum. The chapter also introduces those community Elders and leaders who have contributed to the curriculum through the sharing of their perspectives' on the needs of local youth. I have chosen to separate my journey into six sections, representing the six western seasons of my journey. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge the six seasons of each year of the Woodland Cree of Northern Saskatchewan and highlight the importance of humans accepting that there are 'other' important ways of viewing the world.

Sekwun - Spring

Spring is a season of new life in the Canadian North; a season of emerging color and spirit as the winter snows melt away to irrigate the new growth the sun brings forth.

From the long cold winter comes an invitation to a Rediscovery International Conference hosted by the people of Fort Chipewyan in Northern Alberta. There is opportunity to drive north along major roads bordered by the expansive Boreal forest, then a plane journey across the forests and over the myriad of waterways creating the Athabasca delta. From the air the forest stretches forever, but the impacts of humans are ever-present in a grid of intersecting seismic cut lines and forestry access roads. The delta itself better represents wilderness, for it is teeming with bird-life and has lost most of its winter ice.

A Northern Native Community

Landing at Fort Chipewyan I soon am immersed in the local Cree hospitality. The people are welcoming, happy-go-lucky, and generous as I am presented with a bag of gifts including a dream-catcher and artwork created by a local youngster. I view first hand the gross living conditions and apparent squalor in the hamlet town: old run-down trailer homes, disposable nappies casually discarded, broken down vehicles and rusty unused satellite television dishes. The bus driver drops me off near 'shotgun alley', site of the most recent town squabble and I am more than a little nervous. However, inside "Trevor's"[6] home my perceptions change dramatically. His is a fresh, clean house with lots of indoor plants and, as I later realize, is representative of the inside of many of the homes I visit in the village. I am also sharing the house with Jack, a Canadian of European origin who has picked up a number of survival and Dene drum making skills and who has volunteered at the local Rediscovery camp in recent summers. The evening provides opportunity to chat with Jack about his perspective on Rediscovery and to ground myself in the local area.

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[6] For the purposes of retaining anonymity and confidentiality, pseudonyms are used

The town is situated at the southern end of the mighty Lake Athabasca bordering Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Lake is free of ice but apparently just so, and is a good omen according to the locals for the long weekend and the conference ahead. Community spirit is high but tense, for this is the first such conference to be hosted by the wider community and it has taken some twelve months to coordinate. Fort Chipewyan is a community made up Cree, Chipewa and Metis and is not historically used to communal projects.

Lessons in Cross-Cultural Education

Next morning I meet with Jerome, a Cree-Metis trapper with a limited command of the English language. He is fascinated by my accent, as I am of his distinct slurs and intonations, and he takes great delight in showing me around his trap line. We journey by canoe through the margins of Wood Buffalo National Park, and I listen to Jerome's seemingly endless Moose hunting stories. A goose is shot for an evening meal later in the week. Soon after a Loon is plucked from the sky by twelve gauge shotgun. I commence paddling over to the bird, but am halted by Jerome who indicates the bird was shot for target practice and is not good to eat. I interpret the action as an illegal one, with Loons either protected or we are inside the Park boundary, but Jerome informs me he has rights to hunt and trap in the area. Loons are special birds in my eyes, despite only living in Canada for a short while, and I am left stunned by the act. My concept of native trappers living at one with their natural

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when introducing all persons in this work.

surroundings, in some kind of deep ecological relationship with their animate and inanimate kin, is immediately shattered.

After plucking the goose I am asked to hide the feathers in the bush, which reinforces the fact we should not have been hunting Geese. Later we visit Jerome's grandmother who is busy at work scraping a moose hide. I try my luck at the task and after a couple of minutes am exhausted. The old woman laughs a toothless smile, sets my hands correctly on the implement and guides my hands more effectively across the hide. It is a non-verbal lesson and I soon get the bone working to better effect. Teaching across the language barrier appears easy - the old woman demonstrates repeatedly, I observe, then practice until I have the basics. Not a word is spoken, but I am given a valuable lesson on teaching across a language barrier.

An Evening of Rediscovery

The conference commences later that evening with the lighting of a 'sacred' fire by bow and drill. The task is attempted by a young Cree-Metis man newly skilled in the craft, but performance anxiety pervades as a television camera and many local youth hover closely. After half an hour the fire is finally ablaze, with the assistance of a couple of Euro-Canadian bystanders skilled in the fire-craft. The local Native man appears somewhat embarrassed with his lack of success.

Speeches galore follow, and I am amazed by the large number of youth present speaking loudly throughout. There are no sideways glances from the local leaders to suggest the youth are being disrespectful. Regardless it is a magical time of song, dance, and celebration. I get to meet a number of the Rediscovery International Board members and others involved with Rediscovery Camps throughout western Canada. There are opportunities to meet Elders, youth, and visitors from near and far. We share a glorious feast and an evening of dancing, drums, and further speeches of welcome. I am acknowledged as one who has traveled from afar, along with others from Aoteoroa / New Zealand.

The Spirit of Rediscovery

The people from Aoteoroa welcome me to their whanau (family) and I am encouraged onto a stage to share a speech and to sing traditional songs of my newfound kin. Their openness, warmth, sincerity, infectious humor, and obvious joy for living makes me both proud and humble to be a New Zealander. Lying in bed in the early hours of the next morning I can only reflect on the strength of the Rediscovery movement in making me feel so welcome, and of the feeling of family shared with me by my new-found Maori mates, a feeling I had never fully experienced in my home country.

The following days provide opportunity for getting to know individuals from the Rediscovery family on a more personal basis. The celebrations and endless drumming continue, along with workshops on Native crafts, drum making, storytelling, and other camp program activities. I am surprised by the number of non-native people presenting workshops and leading many of the activities. I am curious about protocols, of the authority necessary for these people to share their skills and stories in the Rediscovery context. I am also surprised by the youthfulness of the Elders present and to the regular reference to the vices of alcohol and drugs during their speeches. For a number of the Rediscovery Elders present it is apparent much of their spiritual training has occurred during healing programs addressing their alcohol and / or drug dependency.

I am also privileged to meet Frank, a tall, athletic, friendly Cree-Metis with an infectious smile. Frank is a graduate from the Physical Education program in Edmonton and it was during his study that he came to rediscover his native ancestry. More recently, he had been involved with the organization of wilderness camps for youth in northern Alberta and has been a board member of the Rediscovery International Foundation for a number of years. Frank spoke a number of times at the conference as he was one of the principal organizers. During these speeches Frank impressed me with his empowering style of leadership, publicly crediting the local people of Fort Chipewyan for the success of the conference.

The Invitation

Early on during the conference I meet 'Tracy', a strong, senior Metis woman with a great sense of humor. She is particularly interested in why I am at the conference and we spend many hours together with a number of Elders in a tipi discussing all manner of things whilst casually chewing away at a stash of smoke cured Moose jerky. It was during this time that Tracy shares her dream of establishing a Rediscovery - style camp in her home community a few hours drive north of Edmonton. I am impressed with Tracy's drive, enthusiasm, her experience with Rediscovery camps, and her warm hearted-ness. We chat into the evening and Tracy speaks fondly and with pride of her family and her involvement with the local Metis Nation, of which she is the chairperson. At one point I ask her if women are able to be Elders in her culture and she laughs and comments... "Owhhh yes! A lot of our Elders are women." A little later I naively ask her if she is an Elder, to which she replies "Owhhh not really... well maybe sometimes." I get the feeling Tracy is only being modest, but I am left wondering if there are ways of determining 'Elder' status without direct questioning and the embarrassment it causes!

Tracy and I also discuss my background in outdoor education and my interests in oral traditions (storytelling) and Native relationships with the land. I share with her my academic interests and motivations for journeying around the globe to Alberta to study. Later that evening Tracy formally invites me to assist her community in establishing a proposed wilderness camp. The invitation is very sincere and I felt I had no option but to accept if I possibly could.

As the conference winds to a close it is time to bid farewell to my newfound friends. There are special hugs for my New Zealander mates and for Tracy. She gives me a special smile and "you will call me about setting up our camp" as she boards her plane. It is certainly something to consider on the long return journey to Edmonton.

Spring Reflections

The remainder of Spring provides opportunity to reflect upon the conference and to read some of the written material on Rediscovery that I had collected. Whilst initially surprised by the number of Euro-Canadians at the conference and directly involved with Rediscovery, especially on the International Board and within its organization and administration, the literature highlights the openness of Rediscovery for all peoples. I questioned how much influence these outsiders have had or are having to the direction of Rediscovery International and if there are opportunities for First Nation input at the International level.

Similarly I am left wondering what my role could be in assisting with the development of a Rediscovery-style camp. With the seemingly high degree of outsider involvement in Rediscovery, I am also unsure how my plans for conducting research into a new program would sit with the Rediscovery Board. Despite the welcome offered me at the conference there was an unease I could not easily explain that suggested I would be overstepping my welcome by getting further involved in the organization. I wondered if I had already overstepped some unknown protocol at the conference or if I was perceived as a threat by some of the Rediscovery folk. Much of the unease I put down to being of European descent and of being a little out of place in a foreign country. I felt it would be important to regularly communicate with members of the Board, to keep them abreast with developments, and to allay any fears they may have of me becoming an interfering university researcher upsetting a local Rediscovery organizing group.

I was also unsure of the strength of Tracy's invitation. Should I follow it up or consider the invitation another goodwill gesture in making me feel welcome at the conference? I was also curious as to how representative the invitation would be of Tracy's local community and how accepted I would be there if the invitation was something the community would support.

I remained uncertain as to what constitutes one being an Elder in the Rediscovery sense, and acknowledge the need to develop better strategies for appropriately identifying Elders without my asking their status directly. As one unaccustomed to the distinct cultures of the many Indian Nations represented at the conference I was fascinated with the feathers, braids, beads and costumes worn with so much pride. Similarly the range of dances, drumming, and song was impressive, contrasting remarkably with the dress and mannerisms of the few Indian folk I had interacted with at University and observed on the streets of Edmonton. These cultural displays reflected the images of Indians I had grown up with via the television and movie screen, barring the bloody battles and Indian warrior scenes. During these cultural demonstrations by youth at the conference there was an obvious pride in being Indian and I wondered if Rediscovery was the thread holding these traditions alive. If the traditions had indeed been rediscovered through the medium of locally coordinated wilderness camps then Rediscovery was an extremely powerful cultural and educational medium.

The Loon shooting incident did not involve directly anyone involved in Rediscovery, but exposed human centered world-views as alive and well in this northern Native community at least. Throughout the conference I saw little to suggest Rediscovery was committed to an ecocentric way with its camps, evidenced by the use of disposable plates and cutlery at every meal, the wealth of litter scattered by delegates, and no ecologically oriented workshops. The conference demonstrated a difference between the ideology and practice of environmental education. Notwithstanding, the conference was not a Rediscovery wilderness camp so I could not make any assumptions about Rediscovery programs themselves.

Nepin - Summer

Summer is a time of ongoing growth and maturity in the Boreal forest. It is a time for long days and short nights, electrical thunderstorms, raging fires, and for new plans to turn to fruition.

Summer is also a time for travel, and I return briefly to New Zealand before returning to Ottawa, the nations capital. There I witness the blatant biculturalism of the French and English on Canada day in the sunshine on the lawn outside Government house. It is a day of celebration of Canada's pioneer spirit, of colonization of the vast land by an enterprising and adventurous people. What is missing to me as an outsider is any significant recognition of the First Nations people of the country, either in past days or the present. I reflect upon the situation in my home country, where the bicultural stance is inclusive of the Maori people, and wonder what political and social events have led to such a situation eventuating in Canada.

Indians in Canada

Aboriginal or native people in North America are typically lumped together using the terms 'Indian', 'Inuit', or 'Metis'. Many Canadians appear misinformed over the concept of 'Indian', and there is much misunderstanding between the terms status and non-status Indian. I was surprised to learn that more than half the native people of Alberta do not meet the Canadian Federal Government definition of Indian. For these people there is no recognition of their native ancestry officially in their own country. During treaty negotiations, when status lists were drawn up, many individuals or families could not be located whilst others boycotted the negotiations as a matter of principle (Alberta Education, 1989). Descendants of those not on the list are not regarded as status Indians, despite some of them living on reserves. Other treaty Indians may be on the status list but may have not been involved in a native community or cultural activities for years and yet the Government recognizes as Indians non-aboriginal women married to status men. Some people believe that this is an intentional act to do away with native heritage, especially when the grandchildren from the marriage do not qualify for legal status. This effectively diminishes the number of persons with native ancestry. There are also many women who lost their Indian status through marriage, although Bill C31 as a part of the 1985 Indian act has controversially permitted some of these women to regain their original status. Being 'Indian' in Canada is a complex issue.

The diversity of Indian people in their various tribal groups is also not well acknowledged in Canada. In Alberta there are nine distinct tribal groupings, that include Beaver, Blackfoot, Chipewyan, Sarcee, Ojibway, Plains Cree, Slavey, Stoney, Woodland Cree, as well as Metis (Alberta Education, 1989). The balance of North America is home to hundreds of separate Indian Nations. Like the countries that make up Europe each of these groups traditionally had their own languages and cultures (Henley, 1989) and many groups still retain these traditions and unique characteristics today.

Indian Stereotypes

Stereotyping occurs when entire groups of people are characterized in special ways, and stereotyping of Indians in Alberta is alive and well. Such stereotyping occurs when particular characteristics distinguish native people from others, typically in the areas of body cleanliness, work ethic, food, sexuality, intelligence, and religion (Alberta Education, 1989). Indian people are faced with a variety of stereotypes in Canada, and endure stereotypical branding involving terminology such as: the 'savage warrior'; the 'squaw'; the 'dirty, drunken Indian'; the 'poor, destitute Indian'; the 'dumb Indian'; the 'lazy Indian'; as well as 'noble Indian'; 'Indian as Guru'; Indian as Nature Lover', and; the 'Indian Princess' (Alberta Education, 1989; LaRoque, 1975; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1991; Mander, 1991).

Stereotypes obscure the humanness of First Nations people, and fail to acknowledge the richness and diversity of Indian Nations in Canada. They are derogatory and have caused irrepressible harm to native people in North America (Mander, 1991; Alberta Education, 1989). Stereotypes do not utilize native terminology and have been perpetrated by the dominant culture, reinforced particularly by the media and through approaches to education. Cree Historian Winona Stevenson is critical of the impact of stereotypes on Indian people and is considered for their future in Canada…

> …the discrimination that stems from stereotypes serves all sorts of functions... And so stereotypes, what they do is serve to maintain the status quo, maintain the position of the ruling elite, maintain the positions of the powerful over the powerless.
>
> (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1992)

Maureen Mathews, from the same C.B.C. transcript suggests the expectation of Indians through stereotype is so ingrained in North American identity almost to the point of hopelessness. She surmises that Indian people are individuals and that Canadians must get to know individuals as humans rather than through stereotyped lenses.

New Age Indian Romanticism is a developing stereotype. In the new age Indians are cast as lovers of nature knowledgeable on every intimate aspect of their natural surroundings, as environmentalists, or as spiritual leaders able to facilitate an enhanced spiritual awakening. Whilst a positive stereotype in one sense, such romanticism is also demeaning and biased...

> ...although the New Age gleans the ancient wisdoms and practices, it has assiduously avoided directly engaging in the actual lives and political struggles of the millions of descendants who carry on those ancient traditions, who are still alive on the planet today, and who want to continue living in a traditional manner.
>
> (Mander, 1992: 207)

The tipi, feathers, headdress, tomahawk, and pipe are all stereotype images associated with Indians in North America. But such images are often incorrectly attributed to First Nation people...

> The tipi has become the stereotypical image of Aboriginal housing. To imply that all native people lived in tipis is as ludicrous as saying all Europeans lived in windmills. Aboriginal people had different types of housing depending on the geographical area. Also many children are under the impression that Native people still live in tipis because teaching emphasizes certain limited periods of history."
>
> (Alberta Education, 1989: 9)

Traditionally the relationship between Grandparents and grandchildren has been a critical element in the maintenance of various Indian cultures (Mander, 1992).These Elders were often the teachers who passed down history and knowledge through the use of story telling and analogy. Alberta Education (1989) point to the social vacuum created by the sudden destruction of tradition, such as when some native children were taken to live in residential schools and the use of their native languages was prohibited. With oral stories and analogies no longer a component of their education, and children away from the influence of their Grandparents and parents whilst forced to speak a strange language, it is not surprising some native children have not been successful in modern schooling. I wonder how informed the Canadian people are to the influence of the church schools on native children or indeed if the schools have in fact been a negative influence for Indian children. Similarly I wonder if the children who went to the residential schools are today supportive as adults of their youth going to school, and if the residential school at Wabasca-Desmarais has had a negative influence upon the support provided for youth today.

Returning to Athabasca

Upon return to Edmonton near the end of summer I take up the challenge and call Tracy, for I want to gauge the genuineness of her invitation. On the phone there is no question Tracy wants me to become involved. We decide it would be appropriate to develop the project through the local Native Friendship Center, a non-profit organization of which Tracy is a committee member. A meeting is planned for early in the Fall.

Tukwakin - Fall

Fall is a season of contrast and of color as the trees of the northern Boreal forest develop a thousand shades of yellow and green. It is a time of windblown leaves and change as the trees develop a starkness to carry them through the winter. Meantime the leaves settle as fertilizer for new growth in the distant spring.

Our first local camp meeting is coordinated by Tracy and is also attended by the Director of the Friendship Center, the administrator, another Friendship Center member and a local farmer recently retired from an academic career in outdoor education. It is great to see my friend Tracy again, but disappointing not to see more community representatives or local Elders present. As the meeting gets under way I am asked about this concept called 'Rediscovery'. As one with a research agenda designed to empower rather than inform I immediately pass the question on to Tracy, as I assume she has had more experience with Rediscovery through her involvement with the Camps in the north than I. The move immediately backfires as I realize Tracy has been referring to cooking at forestry camps in the north over the past few summers and NOT at Rediscovery camps. This takes me by surprise as I am left with the realization no one at the meeting, including myself, has any first hand experience with Rediscovery camps. I do my best to fill in the gaps for the local people and at the end of the meeting there is a general agreement on the need for a camp for local youth. There is some enthusiasm for another meeting for a wider cross section of the community to attend, including members of the seniors association from a small Native community further north.

Early the next week I receive a formal letter from the administrator of the Native Friendship Center to say the Friendship Center committee had met and were supportive of my plans to develop a wilderness camp on behalf of the Center. It is obvious Tracy had done well to convince the rest of her Committee to run with the project, but of concern was the fact the project was perceived as being instigated by me. I am also becoming aware the Friendship Center is largely inactive, that Tracy is one very keen to see some form of community activity, and that she has obviously pinned her hopes upon the Rediscovery camp initiative.

Visiting an Elder

On my next visit north of the city I drive to Tracy's trailer home, at her request. I note the "PROUD METIS" plate on Tracy's car outside and the pride taken in her garden. The inside of her home is warm and the walls lined with family pictures. I get a tour of the walls where I am introduced to her children, grandchildren, and special friends. There are also articles from the newspaper with her photograph and various civic awards Tracy has been given over the years. Over coffee and home cooking we talk about the possibility of future developments for the Rediscovery camp and Tracy is obviously excited that I am still interested. I suggest it would be appropriate for the Friendship Center to invite Frank, the member of the Rediscovery International Board I had met in Fort Chipewyan, to the meeting.

Time and energy is spent later ensuring Frank is able to attend our next meeting, including the drafting of an official invitation on Friendship Center letterhead to satisfy Franks employer his trip south was legitimate. The invitation is the first official camp action, but I am very aware that I wrote it and not the local people. I wonder if this has set too much of a precedent and I have already taken over.

Pipon - Winter...

Winter on the Alberta prairie is crisp and clear, and deceptively cold. Deep blue skies contrast vividly with the hues of gray and white across the expansive landscape. From a distance the forest appears asleep, but the myriad of animal tracks in the snow tell the story of an extended family struggling to survive through the long winter of the frozen north.

The drive through the snow covered road north is stressful as I am concerned about hitting stray moose, deer, or other traffic in the poor visibility. Arriving at the community hall it is obvious there has been lots of preparation for the meeting - coffee and doughnuts provided, a television and video set up, and a brief article in the paper about the forthcoming meeting. I am confident of a large community turnout and impressed with how serious the Friendship Center staff have taken the meeting.

Frank greets me like a long lost friend and with a beaming smile. We share a coffee. I am hesitant to open the meeting and eventually Tracy stands to welcome folk and we do a round of introductions. Immediately we are joined by two of the Elders from Calling Lake, George and Nadine. I sit back in an attempt to observe the proceedings of the meeting, and to get to know the people there rather than leading the discussions.

George is a solid man, dark skinned and robust with the appearance of a bushman and he speaks after the meeting has continued for some time. His speech is in a Cree - English dialect, is soft, deliberately slow, and commands a quiet authority. George shares the experiences he and Nadine have had with previous wilderness camps for youth, as organized by the Calling Lake Seniors Association. There is reference to the important lack of organizational heirachy in the association, where all members are equal... "We are all Presidents, we are all equal" he repeats with a chuckle a couple of times. George appears quietly encouraging and supportive of a community youth camp, but highlights that he and Nadine have previously volunteered for everything. It is obvious he and Nadine would be interested in being paid for their input if they are to be involved.

Connections with Rediscovery International

Later Frank stands and speaks of his experiences with Rediscovery: as a community member establishing a camp, as a Camp Director, and as a board member of Rediscovery International. An overview of Rediscovery camps is provided, as well as some insight provided to the positive aspects of Rediscovery in a number of communities further north. An eagle feather found on a beach years earlier and utilized as a 'talking feather' on previous Rediscovery camps is presented to Tracy. It is a strong symbolic gift and one that brings tears to Tracy's eyes as she accepts the feather on behalf of those present.

After the meeting I share another coffee with Frank and thank him for his inspirational words and gift. We discuss ideas for training local staff for the proposed camp in conjunction with the staff who have worked in camps further north. As Frank leaves he offers one small piece of advice... 'let the community develop the camp at their own pace'. It is a reminder of the importance for me to sit in the background as the community develops their project rather than taking the lead role. I am also reminded of the mistakes community development personnel have made in developing communities through not adequately involving local people in every stage of the process.

For an hour or so I sit in the Native Friendship Center in town drinking coffee. The Center is a small two room office that acts as a drop in center for local people, Native and Non-Native alike. There are support services available to Native people and Center staff are available to counsel and to provide assistance whenever needed. While I am there a number of Native folk wander in, all there to sample a free cup of coffee and to smoke. I say howdy to the drop in visitors but am unable to evoke any real conversations.

The cigarette smoke gets to me so I move outside. Across the road from the Friendship Center is the Youth center, another small shop full of pool tables and coin operated 'space invader' style games. It is after school hours and a few teens hang outside the center. They share a communal cigarette as they lean against the glass fronted building.

A Historical Investigation of the Community

Christmas is spent with friends on a farm just north of the town. It is an opportunity to do some reading and to investigate the local area further. The wider Athabasca area has a rich and diverse history. The earliest documented history tells a story that is just over three hundred years old, but recognizes the area has been inhabited by native peoples, predominantly Chipewyan and also Slaves and Beavers (MacGregor, 1974) for many hundreds of years earlier.

Trading developed around the 1680's and Algonkian Cree from the East, armed with European goods and guns, drove many of the Chipewyans, Beavers, and Slaves westward and northward. Trading with the Hudson Bay Company brought further Europeans, using the Athabasca River as the primary route of travel, pulling scows and York boats to access trapping and trading opportunities further north. An epidemic of smallpox during the 1780's almost devastated the local Cree and Chipewyan groups.

In the 1880's the first paddle steamers were built at Athabasca Landing, now Athabasca township. Explorers, scientists and tourists began traveling northward and the first northern Alberta oil and gas exploration activity began north of the landing. News of gold in the Klondike in 1887 resulted in the Athabasca Landing Trail became Alberta's first dominion highway to the north (Anderako, 1985), transforming Athabasca to a bustling town.

In 1899, Treaty 8 negotiations took place between the various Native groups and representatives of the Canadian Government. As the excitement of the gold rush died, European settlers subsequently moved onto land in the lower Athabasca river area, transforming forest to farmland. With European settlement came western approaches to schooling and widespread acculturation of the local native people. A residential school was established in Wabasca-Desmarais and another just north of Edmonton, meaning many native school aged children were removed from their families to attend schools.

Over time the development of farmland and the more recent impacts of oil and gas exploration have considerably altered the land. Today Athabasca functions as the commercial center for a large rural area and supports a population of some 1965 persons, although less than eight percent of them have an acknowledged Native background (Statistics Canada, 1994b). Many of the local Native people live further north and in smaller villages scattered around Athabasca. At Wabasca-Desmarais, the Bigstone Cree Indian Reserve has a population of 1571 people, whilst another 382 Cree and Cree-Metis people living in or near the community of Calling Lake, some sixty five kilometers north of Athabasca (Statistics Canada, 1994b).

During recent years a University campus has been constructed in Athabasca, and a large scale pulp mill has been developed north of the town. Through a forestry management agreement Alberta - Pacific Ltd., a joint Japanese and Alberta consortium, has the rights for harvesting much of the remaining Boreal forest in the greater Athabasca area. The project has provided employment opportunities for local people but appears to not have universal support from all people in the area.

Revisiting an Old Friend

Tracy is one who is supportive of the pulp mill for the employment opportunities it brings. I take the opportunity to visit with her at her home and to seek her consent for involvement in interviews. She tells a story of her niece interviewing her for a University project and is incredibly proud of her family and their achievements. She also speaks with disappointment of her youngest son who is unemployed and her wish for him to become involved in the youth camp. I ask if the local youth really need a wilderness camp, to which she replies... "Owhhh yes, we really do need the camp." We talk of the local youth and their needs and Tracy provides general statements on 'the problems youth are having' and 'some of the youth being in trouble at school and with the law', but nothing specific.

Tracy provides information on the sorts of things that could be taught in a camp situation... 'Learning survival skills in the bush', 'learning how tough it was when we grew up' (to procure food and live from day to day), 'to learn about the herbs and the animals in the bush.' When I ask 'why?' these things are important for the youth to know Tracy replies... 'The kids need to feel good and to have pride in what they can do'. I listen for more but after a silent moment she laughs and says, 'John, you are the expert in these things. We are expecting you to organize the Camp.' It is a good start to developing a curriculum, but there is work to do in convincing Tracy there are people like her who can contribute to the camp in different, more important ways, than I. However I am conscious I have a background that could greatly assist with the planning and delivery of a wilderness program and that I may be devaluing my potential to contribute to the community in such a fashion.

The remainder of winter is spent in Edmonton with associated challenges, including convincing the university ethical review committee I would not need written consent forms for Elders to complete when they became involved in the project. I also manage to meet Frank whilst he is on business in Edmonton. We talk of progress with the Athabasca camp and I share my concerns of things not happening fast enough for the forthcoming summer. Frank laughs, suggesting it the last minute is the way that most of the camps happen.

Sekwun - Spring

With the changing seasons comes a change in leadership at the Athabasca Native Friendship Center. There is also opportunity to attend the 10th annual Rediscovery International Conference at Port Hardy on Canada's Vancouver Island. I contact the organizers of the conference to see if Rediscovery funding is available for an Elder from the area to attend. There is opportunity to use the air tickets of an Elder from northern Alberta no longer able to attend, so I discuss with Tracy the possibility of her traveling to the conference again. She is adamant someone else should go in her place. Tracy contacts George and Nadine but has no success. In the end the tickets fall through, as does the opportunity to enthuse another local Elder or Leader to the virtues of the Rediscovery concept.

There is no doubt George and Nadine were a little apprehensive to leaving their community, flying to the western side of British Columbia, and spending an extended weekend with a group of strangers. There was also no formal invitation for them from Rediscovery International, and Tracy or I should have ensured the invitation for George and Nadine to be Elders at the conference was made by the organizing group. In addition, I later realized no proper request was made to George and Nadine, and using the appropriate protocol. The presentation of a pouch of tobacco as a gift from the Creator and a request for the Elder to travel to the conference may have been the catalyst for George and Nadine to accept the tickets. In reflection it is not surprising that George and Nadine chose not to accept the tickets to the conference.

Further Lessons on Protocol

I travel to the conference with Tracy's son, who is interested in learning more about Rediscovery. The conference is a major contrast to the previous year and occurs at a coastal campground well away from the village at Port Hardy. The community atmosphere is missing, as is the welcome and warmth received at Fort Chipewyan. Conference activities are coordinated by a group of locals associated with the Heltsuk Rediscovery camp and there are magic moments of celebrations, speeches, songs, drumming, and evening concerts. I share in the sunrise ceremonies each morning and greatly appreciate the sincerity and humor of the Elders present. There are also many periods of down time and opportunities for me to rekindle dialogue with old acquaintances. During one conversation with my old friend from New Zealand I am given a warning... "you are representing all of Aoteoroa with your research. Make sure you do it right." It is a reminder to ensure my approach is not exploitative and meets the approval of the local people.

At the close of the conference I take the opportunity of attending a meeting of the Rediscovery International Board, and it is a time of grief not celebration. I had not realized a number of conference delegates had been offended during the conference, nor that some had left early in disappointment. There had been breaches of important protocol, of which I knew little about, and this reflected upon the Rediscovery organization despite the International Board having little to do with the conference. Those at the meeting took their time to air their concerns and eventually energy re-focused to the future. I was given powerful lessons that day regarding the importance of doing things right and according to protocol. If the Rediscovery camp of which I was to be involved was to be successful I would need to ensure local protocols were an important component of all activities, and that local people with the authority to be teaching according to the protocols were involved.

Entered into my journal on the return flight home is the question "Rediscovery: a middle class, white organization with a native front???" The obvious efforts and energy put into the conference were diminished by a number of errors of judgment by some of the organizing group. Part of the errors stemmed from an apparent lack of understanding of the many protocols of the range of aboriginal cultures present. Rediscovery appeared in the unenviable position of earning and retaining the respect of many cultural groups by doing things the right way for all conference attendees. As the organization grows and conferences attract a wider range of different cultures the issue can only get bigger.

Local Experiences

Returning to Alberta I am nevertheless enthused enough by the conference to locate a bunch of interested Elders and to commence the interview process, as well as get planning underway for a local camp. I call Tracy when next north of Edmonton. She and I arrange to meet that same evening at the Calling Lake School where a cultural dance performance is to be held. We sit together during the performance, which turns out to be a concert performed by a visiting group of Native dancers promoting alcohol and drug sobriety. Many of the local youth think the concert is a joke and there is lots of laughter during sermons given about not using drugs or alcohol, and sheer laughter at some of the antics and costumes the dancers are wearing. I share with Tracy how great it will be to have the local youth sharing their culture with pride in a similar concert after the summer camp. After the concert I share in the bannock and stew the Calling Lake Seniors Association has provided, and enjoy chatting again with George and Nadine. We arrange to meet the following afternoon to discuss the camp, and I suggest it would be good to have a few of the other Calling Lake "Presidents" there too, which is received with a laugh and an "OK" from George. From my perspective the Calling Lake Seniors appear my best bet in attracting local Elders to the camp project.

En-route to our meeting at Calling Lake the next afternoon I take opportunity to visit the new Executive Director of the Friendship Center at Athabasca whom I had spoken with by telephone a number of times. Arriving at the Center I am greeted by a cloud of smoke and the smell of sweetgrass burning. The office has been given a spring clean and the furniture rearranged. Sitting at the front desk is Trevor, a large man with mustache and long hair tied in a pony tail, and who has a friendly greeting and a strong handshake. It is obvious Trevor knows about Rediscovery and we discuss the community plans for establishing a camp in the summer. Tracy has obviously been sharing her camp ideas with Trevor, and he shares his experience with a similar style youth camp at his previous position of employment. His level of obvious experience in coordinating camps is a real bonus.

Trevor climbs into the passenger seat of my small Toyota Tercel, leaving Tracy to clamber into the back seat. Tracy is such a dedicated, friendly person and is totally committed to attending any meetings about the camp. I feel bad that she has to take the rear seat, but we have no option as Trevor's large frame would not fit anywhere but where he is. I attempt to converse with both passengers, but Trevor quickly takes over the conversation. He shares a little of his history as an alcohol and drug dealer, and his subsequent traditional healing path with many 'sweats' (sweat lodge) central to his own rediscovery. I hear some interesting perspectives about the alienation of Native peoples, the healing necessary for youth today, the influence of the residential schools on the middle native generation, and the appropriation of Native ideas by western society. Trevor is not a Native person, although he speaks with some authority as his ex-wife is Cree and he has two children and a grandchild from the marriage. Trevor rolls his own tobacco cigarettes and there is one constantly in his mouth as he speaks. He continues to articulate a line of thought, but I am overawed by the smoke and cannot focus on the messages any longer. I wish my tape recorder was running, and Tracy, like me, appears pleased to arrive at Calling Lake for some fresh air.

Calling Lake Seniors Association

We meet George and Nadine at the community center, and the meeting starts after a few pleasantries. I inquire if there are others at Calling Lake who might be interested in our plans, and mention the Seniors Association. This brings big amounts of laughter from George who shares a story of how he and Nadine had talked to all the locals about joining the seniors association, but that each person asked "how old do you have to be to be a senior?" and when told fifty five they would reply "oh I am only 53 or 54". The Calling Lake Seniors is really only George and Nadine, and the food provided at the concert the previous night, as with many of the volunteer activities in the community, were arranged by the two of them.

We discuss the camp and photos are shared by Nadine of their trappers cabin on Orlof (Kammistekosik) Lake. We talk of the appropriateness of the cabin for use during the camp and other possible venues. A name for the camp is provided by George - "Kammistekosik", the Cree name for Orlof (or Island) Lake where we plan to have the camp. We also talk about joining with the Rediscovery International organization and thus obtain the liability insurance cover provided to affiliated camps. Insurance is a topic we had discussed at a previous meeting and George again voices his concerns about philosophically needing insurance cover. In his reality there is no need for such cover, as the parents are agreeing for their children to attend the camps. I have no doubt such a system may work in the Calling Lake community, but share my concerns about operating without such cover. Trevor shares lots of information about his experiences at other camps, including the need for insurance. Eventually we agree to obtain the insurance, but I feel bad for pushing my agenda onto what is supposed to be a local initiative.

Trevor again takes the floor for some ten minutes talking of his camp leadership experiences and Nadine appears impatient, with fingers tapping upon the table. George seems genuinely interested and asks Trevor for more information. I am fascinated by Trevor's depth of knowledge of aboriginal concepts and his ability to articulate himself. I perceive he will do really well in his new role at the Friendship Center and will have a lot to contribute to the camp plans.

A short time later George asks Nadine if she was interested in helping with the camp, and I realize there has been a big assumption made. I had never formally asked George or Nadine if they were interested in being involved, and nor had Tracy. George lets us all know of the importance of respect and an offering to the Creator before a formal request for something. I feel told off by George and disappointed with myself by slipping up again and not presenting a gift of tobacco. I also realize I am still perceived as the catalyst for establishing the camp and recognize the need to ensure the project is viewed as a local one. The meeting continues and George and Nadine express a willingness to be involved as camp Grandparents, but not to lead the camp or be involved with the planning of food or the activities. We set the camp dates at August 12 to 26, after discussing the best duration of the program would be two weeks. Another organizational meeting date is set.

Stereotypes Again

The return trip to Athabasca is a little more introspective. Trevor is reflecting upon his chance meeting with an Elder at Calling Lake who had been an important part of his life as friend, counsel, and mentor during a time of crisis. Tracy and I chat about her upbringing of all things. She shares her childhood experiences attending the Catholic home school as being very positive and important for her and the messages are in stark contrast to those Trevor had described hours earlier. Trevor and I chat into a tape recorder later that evening over a series of coffees. He shares some of his views on the forthcoming camp and of his role at the Friendship center...

> For me I am really interested in cross-cultural sharing. Part of my mission is to bridge between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal community... if the world is going to be a better place to live we are going to have to find out who is living here now and what is going on. So the cultural caring, the cultural sensitivity, is what I am interested in sharing. Also the cultural identity amongst the aboriginal community themselves, especially with the children. ...by allowing

> both people (native and non-native) on the program you are achieving both objectives.

I question Trevor on the ways the cross cultural sharing could be achieved in a camp setting... "How can you teach that stuff?"

> The right way to me - it doesn't matter if you are speaking from an aboriginal perspective or non-aboriginal perspective -to me the right way is from here (Points to his heart). But it doesn't matter if the symbols you use are feathers, or a cross, or five pointed stars. What matters is that it comes from the heart. That way you get rid of a lot of the garbage and that is the stuff that works.

Trevor goes on to share that the camp must be based upon those elements "I" feel are most important, not those of others unless there are people involved who know the right way. He cautions me on the importance of avoiding the stereotype of Native people holding the key to an ecological future...

> When I hear of Rediscovery doing things according to the local aboriginal way I wonder why. What you are doing is teaching environmental education. If it was coming from the aboriginal people they have the right to teach from that aboriginal base... but we have no right to use that... Founding things on an aboriginal culture, even on approaching them using the protocols and attempting to do things in the right way - part of the stereotype is that our solution to the environmental problem is through traditional (aboriginal) values and approaches. It's a bias to the other side... everyone knows the dangers of stereotypes, the dangers to the native community themselves.

Trevors messages again highlight the dilemma I face as an educator with expertise in wilderness education and my role as a researcher committed to empowering local wisdom and thought to pervade the process of camp development. I elect to reconsider my own role as an educator in the process a closer to the planned camp.

More Committee Meetings

Stereotypes are again discussed at the next camp organizing committee meeting. George shares the importance of having native and non-native kids attending camp together, suggesting Indians need to be seen as people, not just the drunks you see down the street. His pet phrase "we are all equal" is shared again. For George the camp needs to be about breaking the stereotypes non-native kids have about Indians and he suggests this can be achieved through youth spending time together as well as native youth celebrating aspects of their culture with the non-native youth. George also expresses the importance for the youth from Calling Lake getting to know the youth from town (Athabasca) so they are able to better fit into the Athabasca High School in their senior years after leaving the Calling Lake School. Apparently the dropout rate for students from Calling Lake in their final years is high and George suspects the students do not cope well immersing themselves into High School away from home..

Stories of Youth

The afternoon is spent at the Athabasca High School, where I visited with a member of the school counseling staff and representative on the Friendship Center Board. It is my opportunity to observe the youth, and the experience is a similar one to what I would gain in most western schools. I speak to the counselor about the youth she has to work with. Her viewpoints are laced with stories of truancy, drug problems, family violence, sexual and physical abuse, dysfunctional families, drug dependent families, and gambling problems. Her views are reinforced by data from Statistics Canada's (1991) Aboriginal Community Profiles, which suggest local adults are concerned about these issues affecting youth. Yet my own observations around the community have not exposed strong evidence of such problems facing youth. Regardless, I am reminded of a comment by George at the meeting earlier in the day to make the first camp one for the good kids in the community, as a reward for them, and to make it easier to run a good camp. George sees value in not working with youth at risk, at least not in any initial camps developed.

Community Immersion

The next few nights I stay in Athabasca at Trevor's house. It is opportunity to spend time at the local hotel, eating houses, and to walk the streets in the evenings casually observing people. The days are spent at the Friendship Center chatting with the visitors, drinking coffee, and a few years of my life are lost with inhaling cigarette smoke and burning fungus.

I meet one of the cultural advisers for the local AL-PAC pulp mill. Andy's role with AL-PAC is to advise the company on cultural matters, and more importantly to share the messages to the surrounding native villages of the benefits of the mill. He is Cree, is an intelligent, friendly guy and is very interested in the camp concept. We speak of his upbringing in a small Native community further north, of his desire to educate himself and to be financially successful, and of his leaving home to study to become a wildlife biologist. I am interested in the mill and its impact on the Woodland Cree people and Andy speaks of the good the mill has done for the local people - jobs, sustainable growth, money in the community, new roads, and things for the people to do. He suggests that "...we can no longer use the forest the way we used to. We like to retain our cultural values but you can't make a living off hunting and trapping any more. Kids need to survive in the real world. They need to know about cultural change. The best thing a camp could do is ask the Elders to prepare the youth for the cultural change."

Andy is articulate and speaks with conviction. I ask him what youth can learn about themselves through traditional activities like sweats, learning stories, and survival skills. Andy replies "those things are important, but the kids also need some reality to be successful. Jobs and money will make kids feel good about themselves much faster than learning any survival skills." His insights are quickly scribbled down as we share a second cup of coffee. Later I consider asking Andy to become involved in the camp project the next time we meet.

I am fortunate to be able to base myself close to Athabasca for the latter part of the spring, providing many opportunities to visit the Friendship Center and for the camp organizing committee to meet regularly. George and Nadine travel to one of the earlier meetings, as does Roger, a friend from New Zealand, Tracy, and two of the Friendship Center Board. It is a short, though constructive meeting. Trevor had done well securing funding for an additional staff member to work solely on developing the camp. Whilst the position had come late it will certainly take the weight off me to coordinate aspects of the camp, thus allowing me to observe the process and speak with Elders regarding a curriculum. Staff selection for the position comes down to two people and Trevor has a dilemma whether to hire a local Native person with lots of enthusiasm and who could be trained to take a lead role in the future or a European with solid administrative skills who could take a lead role immediately. I sit back and observe the discussion.

The committee are interested in Trevor making the final decision, but I am delighted when George suggests we must select the person who best fits the needs of the position now. As a local Elder George has no problem employing a non-Native person in the Native Friendship Center. We also talk camp staffing and George and Nadine suggest getting other seniors from Calling Lake involved. From their account there are folk in the Calling Lake area with the authority to run 'sweats' and other cultural activities. I am excited to hear of the potential to involve other Elders in the program of interviews and the camp itself.

Returning to Calling Lake

I arrange to meet George and Nadine the following day at their home for a 'cup of tea' and to discuss camp staffing further, which I hope will develop into my first interview with either George or Nadine. Trevor insists he come along the next morning and my friend Roger is keen too. My interview style is interrupted with the presence of the others but I commence regardless, presenting George with a pouch of tobacco and request to hear his views on the camp and its importance for the young people, as well as to hear who else can assist with running the program. The interview does not go well from the perspective of gathering information, but is relaxed and I am pleased with the level of rapport starting to develop between us.

Nadine stays inside crafting deerskin gloves, after providing us tea and scones. I choose to adopt a listener role for the most part once I had made the information request to George, hoping he will be able to better inform me on the needs of youth. My friend Roger, who is a Maori Elder, and an academic conducting research in the Canadian North, also provides a number of additional questions.

Trevor is particularly interested in sharing his previous camp experiences and the importance of local spiritual practices for youth. His enthusiasm for the camp is obvious and Trevor commences to speak about what "we" must do. The "we" appears from a local Native perspective and I learn much from Trevor's obvious depth of cultural and spiritual experiences, but after further discussion I become concerned Trevor is telling George what must happen during the camp. From my perspective I would rather hear what George thinks should be included in a camp. At one time I ask 'I know nothing about cultural activities like the sweat lodge - are they appropriate for local youth?'. My aim is to hear from George, as I had heard 'sweats' were something that had not always been practiced by the local Cree people and had only arrived in recent years. Trevor responds to my question by suggesting the only way to understand sweats is to experience them, then informs George that Roger and I were interested in experiencing a sweat. George suggests that there may be sweat happening this evening, makes a phone call then drives us over to Jeff and Rachel's house.

After driving past many of the outwardly unkept homes in the township we pull up at Jeff and Rachel's. It is a modern, large, clean home with an expansive garden that is well cared for. We meet a friend of Jeff's at the gate and George shares with him our desire to conduct a sweat. Jeff, who is busy under the hood of a minivan, finally comes out to meet us and it becomes obvious Jeff is the more senior in terms of who should be deciding upon experiencing the 'sweat'. Through discussion we discover there has already been a sweat earlier this morning, but that a few of the locals may be keen to sweat again. Heading inside we meet Rachel and her many children and enjoy a number of cups of tea. She speaks Cree to the children and to Jeff. Phone calls are made by Jeff in Cree and Roger and I laugh when the occasional New Zealand phrase is added. It is obvious the locals are putting the sweat on in our honor. As the afternoon turns to evening a number of others arrive. They are all males, and they converse to us in rich, Cree intonations. One of the men, Charlie, has a good command of English and is interested in hearing about New Zealand and why we are in Canada.

The Sweat Lodge

The sweat lodge is located down by the lake, in a beautiful spot not far from Charlie's home. The appropriate number of rocks are added to a pile of wood and the appropriate words spoken before the fire is lit using a big blow torch attached to a gas canister. No need for a bow and drill here! As the rocks heat there is much preparation of pipes, feathers, and associated paraphernalia for the sweat ceremony. The Cree speakers show us their ceremonial material and Roger is allowed to take a photo, something they have never allowed before. The rocks are transferred to the sweat lodge, we are summoned inside and the covers placed upon the bent willow frame. The sweat itself consists of a number of periods of intense heat as water is added to the hot rocks as words, songs, and specific activities occur within the lodge. At one time we all provide a song in the sweat. At my turn I realize there are no songs in my culture that seem appropriate for me to share. I eventually contribute a few excerpts from a song I had learned at the Port Hardy conference, but I negate to share whose song it was.

Each sweat 'round' is followed by a short period of rest outside and opportunities to drink water and have a swim. During one such interval one of the Cree speakers asks Roger about the traditional hunting practices of the Maori. There is surprise when Roger informs that there are no Moose in Aoteoroa, to which the question comes "what do you hunt, what do you eat?". Roger replies "well we brought some pigs and rats over from the Polynesian islands and of course we ate our slaves and enemies!" This brings considerable discussion in Cree and lots of laughter from Roger and I, as well as stares from the Cree speakers. After the sweat we retire inside Charlie's house where to our delight a feast has been prepared by the women. Roger, Trevor and I are summoned to the table and requested to commence eating. The locals watch, and Roger and I realize it is impolite not to stop until we are finished. Plates and plates of food are shoved our way before I can eat no more. It was only then we realized the locals were scared if we didn't have enough to eat then we might eat them!

The situation becomes a BIG joke and we all laugh for ages about it. I get to know the Cree speakers as Jack and Nigel, and we share a fantastic evening of cross cultural discussion with them and their wives. They are excited to hear a camp is being planned for the local youth. They are also interested in the possibility of providing sweats for the camp and I look forward to further discussion with them. Late into the night we return to Athabasca, but not before Roger and I are presented with substantial gifts including a traditional Dene drum, Mohawk eagle carving, and blankets. The gifts conclude a day of incredible generosity from the local people, as well as enormous breakthroughs with my interview plans. I am especially pleased to have been given a big hug by Nadine as we departed Calling Lake and I take it as further acceptance by the people of me into their community.

Returning to Athabasca

The following week I meet Lisa, the newly employed Camp Administrator. She is an outgoing, enthusiastic person and will be great value for the camp organization. Her major role that first week is fundraising and already there is over two hundred dollars in the bank, with promises of further donations. We spend time discussing the camp organization to date, and Lisa produces a camp book she has compiled and it has a list of potential activities that could be presented as well as pages of organizational things needing completion. It appears Trevor has provided Lisa with plenty of ideas and that she has already acted on many of them.

Nepin - Summer

My list of potential community leaders for interviewing now includes Tracy, Trevor, and Andy from Athabasca, as well as George, Nadine, Jeff and Rachel, the Cree speakers, and Charlie from Calling Lake. With little over a month until the camp starts, I decide to really focus upon developing a camp curriculum. I stay over at Tracy's house a number of evenings and I also chat with her in town at the Friendship Center.

Revisiting an Old Friend II

Tracy has a fascinating life history. We revisit her school days and learn of her enjoyment of the schooling and shared-living process whilst away at school - an adventure away from the family where a great number of living skills were acquired. During her youth there were also many times of hardship ... the challenges of providing meals and clothes for the rest of the family, having to find and to grow things to eat, procuring medicines from the bush, making things to wear. Following school Tracy joined the Air Force and during her time with the Force she became one of the first female physical training instructors. She thrived on the physical challenges the Force provided and was extremely competitive with her sports. Tracy also talks of regret on having to leave the air force after falling pregnant out of wedlock. The personal insights Tracy provides explain much about her forthrightness regarding local youth and what needs to be a part of the camp activities.

Tracy recognizes that the demands and challenges for youth today are very different from those of her generation, but she also sees the influence of alcohol on youth as a major issue as it has been in her lifetime. Of serious concern to Tracy is the breakdown of the nuclear family and she views that many of the problems of youth stem from the lack of guidance by parents and grandparents. ... "There is too much gambling by the parents, too little money available for eating decent meals." "...some of the kids don't even care who their parents are or their grandparents - it's sad for them." Tracy also sees youth without enough to do... "they don't look after their Elders like we used to." There are words about the local Youth Center... "I think the Youth Center is a bad thing. All it is a chance for the kids to get together and get up to no good." Tracy suggests the Center needs to involve sports and outdoor programs not just video games and pool, to get kids outside and enjoying being healthy. The active living aspect to the wilderness camp is something Tracy believes the youth will really enjoy.

I am fortunate to meet and to share meals and conversation with a number of Tracy's family, including a number of evenings with Tracy's son and an evening with one of Tracy's grand-daughters and great grandchildren. I really feel welcome and at home with the family and at one point I share with Tracy the fact she reminds me of my own now deceased Grandmother. The comment brings a big smile and a hug. Tracy's family are all very full of life, energetic, and carry Tracy's work ethos. Many of her grandchildren are completing or have completed tertiary level training, something Tracy is enormously proud of. We discuss Tracy's situation as a Metis. She too is very proud of her Metis status, and her family history relating to the days of Louis Riel, and she provides a book on Reil's life achievements for me to read. Her family have a history of being hard workers, which is... "a great virtue for young people to have." The idea of families being in camp together, and doing and sharing experiences together appeals to Tracy, but not for the whole camp time... "maybe just for the weekends and the rest of the week the kids can have the camp to themselves."

Survival skills are high on Tracy's list of things youth need to know... "It would be worth it even if (Trevor) can teach them how to catch a fish and cook it properly, owhhh yes, that would be good." In the camp situation "...there is opportunity to learn about yourself, and to know what to do if you are lost in the bush." Tracy suggests youth are... "too scared of bears these days to go out and collect herbs, even if they knew what they are looking for." It appears a camp could do a great deal to reduce the anxiety youth have for going outdoors, and for learning some wilderness living skills.

Looking towards the Summer Camp

Tracy, Lisa, and I spend an afternoon out at the AL-PAC mill collecting two truckloads of food the mill has donated to the camp. We spend most of the evening repackaging the food and locating people in the community with freezer space to store the perishables. Lisa rigorously documents who has what stored for us, and some of the people offer more food when they hear of the camp. Lisa has already raised more than two thousand dollars in less than a fortnight from the business community, and has approached the local newspaper to advertise the next few camp organizational meetings to seek additional support. We elect to spend the two hundred dollars necessary to affiliate ourselves with Rediscovery International and to provide ourselves with liability insurance. The camp wheel is beginning to turn.

Camp staffing is still an area of concern, and something Lisa is not too keen to arrange as she has no experience with coordinating programs. Whilst there is a lot of support for the camp only the Cree speakers at Calling Lake have offered to assist with the program, and then only for the cultural activities. I am very aware of the safety and health obligations we have to Rediscovery International and the importance of appropriately experienced and qualified staff if we are to lead any outdoor pursuits - type activities. I decide to take on the role of program coordinator, after much encouragement from Tracy and the organizing committee. My first task is to consult with a number of colleagues involved with outdoor education in and near Edmonton and tentatively line up a few folk to assist with the program on certain days.

Meeting again with Nadine and George I am focused upon getting their perspective on youth. They are hesitant to describe any of the needs of youth from their perspective and I sense they do not want to pass judgment upon anyone else. I share my concerns of the lack of time before the first day of camp and all the things that need organizing, including developing a program of activities. George shares the comment 'there is plenty of time yet', a phrase I hear regularly during the following weeks. He suggests the Elders from Calling Lake... 'will look after the spiritual stuff and that he and his trapping partner Charlie could teach the kids how to set a net and clean the fish.' He suggests 'Nadine' 'can show them how to cook it and I can show them how to eat the fish' (laughter). Nadine also suggests 'there are women around who could do (weave) some baskets and show them how to collect herbs and make dreamcatchers'. There is an obvious range of skills available in the Calling Lake community and I encourage George and Nadine to organize anyone they think may be interested in helping, then am aware there will be a need to formal ask other community seniors to assist.

I sense George and Nadine perceive the program will fall into place without too much effort, however in my own practice I am used to programming and sequencing activities in a structured fashion. A personal challenge will be to sit back and observe the local way of programming.

I go on to share of the skills of a friend with bushcraft and survival skills with whom I had been learning the art of birch-bark basketry. When I share to George that we are hoping to collect a load of bark from a forest destined for milling sometime, he informs me of the importance of giving respect to the trees before we take the bark. This, as George highlights, involves making an offering at the base of the tree before cutting and peeling off the outer layer of bark. George suggests tobacco may be an appropriate thing to give to the forest before we take from it. I seek further clarification from George on why this procedure is important and whether it would be important for youth to know about whilst in the forest. There is a longish silence, then George says quietly... 'respect is important... we need to understand the respect, ...the trees need respect just like humans you know, even if it just means giving one cigarette.' I ask George if he will share this important teaching to the youth at the camp as well as any others he feels is important. 'Maybe' comes the reply with a wry smile, and I later realize I should have acknowledged George's teaching through following the protocol of giving tobacco when making a request to an Elder, just as he had shared with me. I felt stupid with not following George's teaching and giving tobacco, but had none on me. I wondered if providing a verbal acknowledgment to the Creator would suffice in such a future situation.

Recruiting Staff

Whilst in Calling Lake I take the opportunity to meet with Jeff and Rachel. Jeff is out playing with an old car engine and Rachel is busy picking up toys from the garden. I chat with Rachel for awhile and then Jeff is summoned and the three of us have a cup of tea. The kids are all away with the neighbor, at swimming lessons in Athabasca, so the house is quiet. Jeff and Rachel had met at University in Edmonton, and I find out Rachel is Nadine's daughter. Rachel teaches at the local school and Jeff keeps busy doing all manner of projects in the community. He is 'treaty' from a reserve between Calgary and Edmonton and receives a small wage from oil royalties on the reserve. I share my interest in the camp being planned with them, and that it is a research project from the university. Jeff tells a story of his yet to be completed degree. Apparently he has an assignment to complete for one of his professors, but hasn't thought about completing it for years. 'Maybe I will' he says after Rachel suggests he could finish it.

Rachel shares her wish for the children to be better at speaking Cree. She blames the local parents for not speaking Cree in front of their kids. 'Up in Wabasca a lot more kids speak Cree' she says. I recalled from my previous visit that both Jeff and Rachel had spoken Cree with their children. I ask about the importance of the sweat lodge for youth and other spiritual ceremonies and Rachel waits for Jeff to respond. He appears in a far away place and suggests things like 'fasts' and 'sweats' are important for the kids to do.

I pull out a pouch of tobacco and formally invite Jeff to assist with the camp by providing any cultural activities he feels is important for the youth to experience. The request he considers for some time and Rachel shares she will be too busy looking after the kids. Jeff makes a phone call and chats away in Cree. Again the words New Zealand are mentioned and within five minutes Nigel and Jack, the Cree speakers from the sweat experience, arrive. There is lots of laughs and Cree spoken, and Jeff tells me that he and Nigel were giving Jack a hard time for thinking I am a cannibal. I laugh too. We chat of the possibility for youth to experience sweats up at the camp. Nigel wonders how we can get the rocks up there and there is discussion in Cree for some time. Nigel, and especially Jack cannot speak English well and I am provided with only pieces of information. It becomes obvious the local leaders will coordinate the cultural activities for the camp, including arranging for a big feast on the last night. By the sounds of it there had been planning already between Nadine and the guys to get a Moose or a deer to go with the fish on the last night. A lot of planning had gone on behind the scenes and I am delighted the locals were taking a big interest in seeing the camp happen.

Charlie also arrives and the four men go outside for a smoke. I remain inside chatting with Rachel for a few minutes before grabbing a sweatshirt and joining them on the verandah. Almost immediately the conversation turns to car repairs and I am left with Charlie. He is George's trapping partner and has shares in the cabin, but has a successful business in the community and so the trapping is these days only a recreational pursuit. I tell Charlie of my trip to the cabin and of the potential for an amazing camp at the Lake in the next few weeks. Charlie turns the conversation to business, explaining the comfortable lifestyle he is living but suggests that it would be good to get Jeff and the other guys involved in an outdoor business in the future. Charlie would really love to teach people true wilderness survival. He talks of giving people nothing and making them trap their dinner, after first giving them some lessons in trapping. We chat about possible survival programs, eco-tourism opportunities, and the potential for getting a permanent camp established as a way of providing regular employment, 'especially for Jeff'. It is obvious the local leaders have thought and shared their plans for a permanent camp that could be used for a range of activities.

Charlie tells me of the dangers of being paid for providing cultural activities... 'it would not be right to get paid to lead sweats, or for others to.' This is a subtle yet clear message to give a sizable donation to Jeff and the Cree speakers for their involvement in the camp but not to pay them directly for their work.

I ask Charlie the question I had grown accustomed to asking recently... "How will cultural activities, traditions, and learning to speak the language help young people survive in the modern world?" "It's a crutch." Charlie replies, "The culture is the crutch that helps the young stand tall when the world is pressing down on them." Charlie goes on to suggest that it is important for the local kids who are of Cree and Cree-Metis lineage to have a traditional and spiritual founding. He shares the story of how Jeff, and also Nigel and Jack, had been on a spiritual learning path for many years as the result of a local Elder assisting them to discover who they are. Charlie then refers to Jeff now being an Elder in his own right, and I am pleased I had presented tobacco to Jeff hours earlier when asking for his input.

Charlie asks me about my own upbringing, which catches me by surprise. I share a little of my family history, my career, my passion for the outdoors and the emotional boost being in the outdoors gives me. I also share of my commitment to outdoor education and of the power that the outdoors contributes to learning. Charlie tells me he wishes he had more time to spend at the cabin and to share his trapping skills in the bush with others. He invites me to go for a walk in the bush with him one day, and I reply "how about during the camp? Maybe you could take me and a group of the kids out for a walk one day." I immediately regret asking the question and make a mental note to formally ask Charlie to be involved in the camp in the right manner and at an appropriate moment.

We talk trapping and the necessary respect for the animals. Charlie shares how much you can learn about an animal by trapping them, and the respect you gain just from knowing them. 'There is a beaver out near the cabin - maybe you can come back in the fall when I plan to get it', he suggests. I ask Charlie about his views on AL-PAC milling the forests and he suggests '...if I was really against it (milling) I would have to move out of my house' in reference to the timber and the paper in his house and his dependence on paper. He mentions the '...need for the logging protesters to spend time doing without their possessions to see what it is really like.' Charlie goes on... 'The funny thing is all them protesters are protesting with a stack full of papers at their side'.

Charlie suggests that there is too much emphasis on money today and that people need to spend time in the bush without anything for awhile. 'How many people could walk for a day and know how far they have walked?' he asks. I immediately wonder to myself how important that knowledge really is. Later I spend a long time reflecting upon that specific comment and try and unlock any special meaning it may have. I foresee benefit in people being able to walk comfortably and knowledgeably through the bush, and hope more meaning shall be exposed at a later time.

The Build Up to Camp

The summer days and nights are wet with rain and opportunities to arrange for the camp pass by quickly. Organizational meetings take place most days at the Friendship Center leading up to the camp start date, usually with Tracy, Lisa and myself but also on occasion with Trevor, George and Nadine. Lisa, in particular, has been extremely busy arranging for all manner of things. However, despite my discussion with George about things happening at the last minute and his ongoing 'there is still lots of time' response, I am still very concerned about the camp being disorganized. I choose not to share the feeling with my fellow organizers.

At one meeting I do share my concerns about not yet having a locally based curriculum from my discussions with local people, but also share the few insights I have gathered regarding the program. Feedback from the group is positive and for the most part the group is happy with whatever I recommend. There is a general feeling that I am being perceived as the one with the outdoor education experience and that I should be making all the program decisions. Attempts at highlighting the importance of a locally based program fall on deaf ears and Tracy suggests at the meeting that I should be the camp director, being responsible for getting the youth and staff busy and active each day whilst at Camp. Directing is not the leadership style I hope to take during the program and I neither accept the position nor fully reject it.

I take up George's suggestion to go and visit Kammistekosik Lake, but upon arrival at Calling Lake Lisa and I can not locate George as planned. After a few hours we decide to go to the campsite without George, as we have a map with the trappers cabin marked upon it. The access track is not obvious from the map, so I make the decision to follow an old forestry cut line through the bush to the lake. Lisa has no experience with map reading and is happy with my decision. She is not a fit woman and the walking is difficult as we negotiate re-growth and dead trees. I follow the general cut line, but it soon disappears, so elect to use the sun as a general bearing before we intersect with an existing four wheel drive track. After a couple of hours it is obvious that we are in the wrong part of the forest. The bush for miles around us is flat, and very boggy in places. I really enjoy the challenge of finding my way through the undergrowth, but I am able to feel the panic and fear someone uncomfortable with bush experience would have in the situation.

It is a major relief to Lisa when I finally pull a compass from my jacket pocket and commence to take navigation a little more seriously. I did not realize her level of concern and we talk of Lisa's fear of being lost and spending the night in the bush. At one point I leave Lisa resting in a small clearing and run off on a bearing which I hope will get me to the lake. After ten minutes I return, unsuccessfully, and Lisa is singing away not because she is happy, but through a very real dread of running into bears. She is very relieved to see me return, but not happy that we are in fact not where we should be. After another grueling hour of bush-whacking we locate the access road to the cabin. A further hour of easy walking and we arrive at Orloff Lake and the trappers cabin.

Orloff (Kammistekosik) Lake

Orloff is a welcome rest spot. It is a large, crystal blue fresh water lake edged with barely discernible white sandy beaches and surrounded by forest. Large trees exist to the waters edge and the place has a special wilderness feel about it. There are no access roads closer than the one we had walked from and there is no way powerboats will be able to disturb the peacefulness. From the map we discern the far shore is actually an island and that the lake is more than three times as big as we can see. The lake provides lots of scope for adventure - canoeing, fishing, swimming, camping on the island - but shall require lots of risk management and some preliminary teachings in safe water adventure. The Loons are far out in the lake and their calls are welcoming. There will be many opportunities for natural investigations from the water as well as on land. Apparently there is a bird nesting site a kilometer or so from the camp, and in the distance I am able to identify an unusual hillock marked on the map. From a program perspective the lake and the forest provide a rich environment for exploration and discovery. I am also aware of the wilderness feel of the immediate surroundings and with a group of approximately twenty we will need to ensure the area remains well looked after.

I explore the immediate vicinity. There is fresh bear scat on a path around the lake from the cabin, and I decide not to adventure far in that direction. I visualize where we can construct group shelters, where we can collect crafting materials, where toilet facilities can be located and built, where we can situate a food store and natural fridge in the nearby muskeg swamp. There are plenty of construction materials and campcraft project stocks in the immediate bush, such as birch-bark and willow for baskets. George and Nadine have an established campfire outside the cabin, which will be excellent for group gatherings once more pieces of furniture can be built. There is an established tipi for smoking fish, plenty of firewood, a canoe and an aluminum dinghy, and a locked shed with George and Charlie's fishing and trapping gear likely stored inside. The cabin itself is new and fitting with a large domestic style gas stove, stocks of food, and two beds. I think to myself the cabin will be ideal for George and Nadine to use whilst they are camp directors!

We laze in the sunshine for a few minutes. The afternoon is a welcome respite from the constantly wet days we have had in recent weeks. The lake itself is flooded, with the sandy beaches barely visible underwater. I look forward to the next week being warm, so the whole area can dry out a little. Lisa decides to make a return along the easy to follow access track, as she is concerned about how late it will be when we get back. I continue to explore and to visualize the camp in action. I look forward to the taste of freshly smoked fish, those looks of anticipation and smiles of achievement from the camp participants, the hive of activity on the lake and in the bush surrounding the cabin, and the village that will soon be created here.

Eventually I follow Lisa along the return path, and find myself also whistling away to alert the bears of my presence. Following the path is relatively easy, although there are mud pools at regular intervals requiring us to scout around them. I enjoy the opportunity to view the surrounding forest so I can further plan for the camp which is fast approaching. After a soggy one hour walk I catch up to Lisa in an area of trees with screeds of tape and fluorescent paint. It is next to an interesting wetland area but it is obvious the surrounding forest is destined for cutting in the immediate future. The balance of the trail is through areas already 'harvested' and there is no evidence of the area being replanted with small trees. The trail becomes a four wheel drive highway, but is a mud swamp. We are forced to scout our way around the big mud holes before arriving at the main road and our pick-up truck late in the summer evening.

More Camp Activities

George is delighted to hear a few days later of our wanderings through the bush to the cabin, especially of our direct route through the bush. I perceive he is a little surprised at our success in getting to the cabin directly and he later takes great delight in telling others of our exploits. Over a cup of tea we discuss the possibilities for program activities at the Lake. George suggests the local conservation officers may be interested in leading an expedition around the lake. They have a powerboat and decent sized outboard that could be towed behind a four wheel bike to the camp and which could act as a safety boat to follow a group in canoes. Of importance for the activity is for the youth to get to know the conservation rangers and for them to be exposed to a possible career in the outdoors. Also of interest is for the youth to be shown some of the magical aspects of the flora and fauna of the immediate area by the conservation staff. I suggest that local people, such as trappers like himself, could also provide unique and interesting insights and George says 'oh yes Charlie and I'll be there fishing each day'. George invites me to go fishing with him early each morning during the camp and I look forward to the experience. For George getting up early is a great way to celebrate the new day and he sees the importance of role modeling this to the youth.

George shares his wish for the youth to be exposed to a range of community people whilst at the camp - the native representatives of AL-PAC, the Police, youth Justice committee members, Elders from Bigstone Cree Nation at Wabasca, School

Teachers and Principals, newspaper staff, Conservation Rangers, and local Politicians. For George the camp is an opportunity to encourage youth leadership, to encourage the kids to set plans for themselves for the future. His desire to 'hand pick' youth for the camp reflects George's desire to foster leadership rather than deal with some of the serious issues facing the youth. The summer program is an opportunity to reward good students. 'We have to have a good camp the first time to give the kids something to aim for'.

George, like myself, is keen to start small and to develop a regular program of wilderness camps. We talk of the future and George's dream of establishing a bush facility on the lake. George hand draws a map of the lake and shows me a place he has identified as a great place for a permanent community camp facility. He speaks of winter survival courses that he and Charlie could lead, and of getting a trapping group of interested young people together. When I question why learning the skills necessary for trapping and winter survival are important for young people to know George says 'it gives them something good to do', '...maybe it will give them something to feel proud eh'. George goes on to suggest a few cabins in the bush could allow youth justice kids an opportunity to complete their community service by growing vegetables and building a lodge. The lodge could then be something the community could use for family camps. This I perceive is George's vision for the future, and I look forward to exploring his vision further, perhaps on one of the early morning fishing trips we have planned for.

I follow George's lead and chat with the local conservation staff about program possibilities in the Orloff (Kammistekosik) Lake area. We pour over maps and chat about some of the special areas adjacent to the lake. The concept of getting to the lake during the camp appeals, but the timing is not great as staff are in short supply and one of the local staff is on leave for the two weeks we have planned for the camp. 'Perhaps we could get up there for a day' is offered, and there is the idea of a Native Ranger from a small community just south also heading over. Lisa follows up the visit with an official invitation, as well as sending one out to a range of community personnel. One of the problems is the distance of the Lake from the main road, requiring a four wheel bike to be available to collect and return guests to the camp. The offer of local farm 'quads' comes in and we soon have available vehicles through Lisa's magical skills at rallying community support.

Lessons from another Community Leader

Andy from AL-PAC returns to the Friendship Center one day I am there and we share a coffee. He is aware of the developments for the camp and of the support AL-PAC had provided with the food donation. He also points out the possibility of financial support being potentially available from the mill which has Lisa chatting with him immediately regarding who to contact. Andy is interested in who will be leading the camp activities. He, like George, suggests role modeling is important for the youth and that local people must be involved, but that because he is originally from Fort Chipewyan that he would not be appropriate. We encourage Andy's involvement, but he shy's away from taking any role in the camp and questions what he could teach anyway. I share with him George's interest in role modeling career possibilities for the youth and Andy says he will check with his boss at AL-PAC and see if a visit is a possibility. We chat about the needs of youth, and I follow my leads from our previous conversation and I ask how we can best prepare youth for the real world. It is obvious Andy believes a solid formal education and to go away to school (University or College) is important, that jobs don't just happen but youth will have to work to be successful. Andy thinks welfare is bad for native people. From his perspective local Native people will never become self sufficient again as long as the government is handing out a way of living. 'Learning survival skills in the bush is fine, but what's the point if they can't survive in the city on their own. No one lives in the bush any more.' The best strategy for Native kids, according to Andy, is to remove all government welfare and force people to survive for themselves... 'By the time they are old people there might be a new generation who can survive in the real world'. It is an interesting perspective, and one that is in contrast to the need for increases in welfare for aboriginal people that I have become accustomed to hearing.

I question Andy if in his view a wilderness camp as we have planned will really just be a waste of time. A sudden ally is found as Andy speaks of the strengths the kids can get from learning new skills such as paddling a canoe or skinning a beaver; of the importance of activities like sweats when youth can acknowledge the creator; the friendships that can be developed through having fun together. I feel bad for the way the question was framed, for it forces Andy to make a response I wish to hear,. Yet I also feel he is genuine in his views, for Andy commences by reflecting upon his own lack of enjoyment during his school years. He suggests that if he was a teacher he would go out of his way to make sure the kids have a good time whilst they were learning, just like his teachers did when he was at community college. He saw the camp situation as an opportunity for youth to enjoy themselves and to motivate the students to enjoy their schooling more. What I saw was a potential teacher in front of me. Andy is a young man, and one with whom the youth at a camp would respect and enjoy working with. I do not really know his skills but feel he would be a valuable addition to the camp staff, but my suggestion of getting involved is again turned down. Reflecting upon our conversation later that night I recognize I had been viewing Andy as a community leader but not treating him with enough respect. I should have presented him with tobacco and asked him to support the camp in a more respectful manner. I look forward to opportunities to redeem the situation.

Local Insights

The following few days I spend living at Trevor's apartment. It is adjacent to the Native Friendship Center and I am able to spend a lot of time planning the finer logistical details of the camp. The start date is less than a week away and there is much to do. Lisa has done an amazing job in accumulating almost five thousand dollars from local business donations. There are also many donations and loans of equipment, including a complete camp of tents, group cooking equipment and utensils supplied by the local forestry camp. We strategize ways of utilizing the money in the best possible manner. The budget we had drawn up a month earlier included wages for all staff involved, but it also had a figure of over eleven thousand dollars. It appears unlikely that the appeal we had made to the Albertan Government Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to support the camp to the tune of six thousand dollars would be granted. We decide that rather than paying staff we would generously cover all expenses and provide a small honorarium for each person involved. The youth attending would come from Calling Lake (8), Athabasca (10), and Wabsaca-Desmarais (2), but would not be required to contribute funds. The task of equipping the youth with suitable clothing and equipment would be a significant challenge in the short lead-in time they had been given to prepare.

There is a regional softball tournament happening in the town, bringing young visitors from all over Alberta for the week. The town is abuzz with youth and the Teen Center is a popular meeting place until the early hours. Cigarettes are almost constantly alight and I wonder where the youth get the money to pay for their habit. I cannot distinguish the locals from the visiting youth, except for the team jackets worn on occasion. The apartment close to Trevor's, where I am staying, is also frequently visited, and I suspect the place may be a dealing ground for drugs.

I spend a morning up at the softball ground where the local boys team is very competitive, and they command a lot of community support. I attempt to chat with a group of the local kids. They are polite enough, but not very responsive. A situation not unusual for youth of their age in any town I suspect. Regardless one of them had heard there was a camp happening north of Calling Lake, so at least the grapevine was working. The youth were interested to hear canoeing may be one of the activities available during the camp. As a group they decided to leave me sitting alone on the small stand after only a minute of dialogue. The softball tournament is regularly interrupted by the incessant rain and our organizing committee explicitly request a let up in the weather so the camp can be bathed in sunshine. We decide it will be best to deliver the camp participants, staff, and all their gear into the camp on the quads and trailers rather than subjecting them to what will obviously be a mud slog by now into the Lake.

Calling Lake Revisited

I also visit George and Nadine again in Calling Lake. I chat with Nadine about her school day experiences and whether she had attended the Catholic School at Wabasca-Desmarais. She had, and from all accounts Nadine had a positive experience at school... 'Some people wanted to stay at the school over the summer rather than going back to their homes, or else they wanted to go back to school like me after returning to the village.' Nadine shared that in those days there were no kids who were disrespectful or getting into trouble like they are these days. Nadine talked of the problems in the local community and some of the problems in it. She is adamant the issues of youth are compounded by parents who are not there for their kids. She tells a story of the local kids who always come over to play or to watch TV, that there is never any food in the children's house and how she would have to feed them while Mum and Dad were at the bingo or in the city. 'They don't seem to care for their kids; it's not the kids fault' Nadine suggests. I ask of the problems for youth and Nadine chooses not to outline any of the problems but rather to suggest the parents must play a greater role. I enjoy the opportunity to speak with Nadine on her own.

When George arrives inside Nadine goes on to share with pride all about her family and the successes of all her nine children and their children. She is delighted things are going so well for all her kin. One of her sons is the first Native elected member of the Albertan Government and Nadine shared how difficult it was sometimes when her son did something the old people of the community did not agree with. She shared how she wanted to make sure things that nothing would happen to her family.

We talk about the AL-PAC mill and how central Nadine's son was in the development of the mill. It seems as though both Nadine and George were not supportive of the mill and had been vocal for some time up until recently about the project. I ask George how special the forest was for him. He shares how his ancestors had lived in the bush, and of the need to respect the forest and the animals. I ask if AL-PAC is operating respectfully in the forest, to which George looks at me and says conclusively "No."

The conversation immediately changes. George tells me of a community youth Justice meeting he attended the previous night and how severe the sentences were for the kids. There is apparently no support or supervision given to the kids on community service. George shares his wish for a Native Community Service Coordinator to whom the kids in trouble could relate. I share Trevor's concept of a youth camp in the bush that could act in a community service capacity, and double as a place for family retreats.

George goes on to share a recent experience that he and Nadine had where a Native organization in the city had sent out a group of 'troublemakers' for a wilderness camp at Rock Island Lake. The experience had been a disaster, with a lot of rain falling every day and a miserable experience eventuating for all the campers. To make matters worse Nadine and George had been required to run the camp, to get all the meals prepared and to run the activities. It had been a negative experience for both of them. Their stories told me much about George's willingness to not want a lead role in running our forthcoming camp nor for Nadine to be in the kitchen coordinating the meals. It also explained the importance of George insisting the youth were 'good' kids from the community. I mention that Tracy and Lisa were very interested in organizing meals and that I would look after the program. It is obvious from George's story that he was very perceptive to the needs of the youth, and his own philosophy of learning experiences needing to occur in a positive environment echoed my own. I realize I should consult with George more on his experiences previously with local camps.

Prior to departing, I ask George and Nadine if they would consider being our official camp grandparents, and my official fishing and fish smoking instructors. They both laugh and I discover Lisa has already presented them with some tobacco and asked the same question days earlier! I outline my concerns of the many, many things needing to be organized before the camp happens. George is supportive, recognizing my level of pre-camp stress, and comments "there is always time." It is a phrase I get used to hearing over the days ahead.

Summer Weather

The following day there is a camp meeting and I arrive to the news that George had called and wants the camp postponed for a week. Apparently the Lake is flooded and the cabin is close to being submerged. Reading between the lines I realize George is not wanting to be involved in such a long camp, especially if the rain continues to fall. His stories of negative experiences with youth were fresh in my mind and it is likely the stories told the previous evening were part of George's conscious decision. I was disappointed the camp might be canceled, but also pleased to have another week of planning and opportunities to finalize staff for the camp experience. We elect to reduce the program to seven days from the original fourteen. In many respects, one week will suffice for a first time wilderness camp experience, as well as requiring less logistical organization and considerably less food..

The following few days are spent organizing activities and people to lead the activities. I leave Lisa to arrange the many details that had been overlooked, including how to get the youth to the road end nearest the lake and at the cabin trail-head. The remaining days I spend with friends on a farm north of the town. It is a time of reflection on the process of seeking community information and the community initiative, as well as an opportunity to focus upon the forthcoming camp experience.

There are many uncertainties, not the least being the program and how it will evolve from my basic plans. I note that the program plans are my own and not the local people's. From their information I have formulated a basic program in my own mind, which I shall present to the committee soon. I am torn between sitting back and letting the locals come up with the plan and coordinating all the various camp activities myself. I am aware the Cree speakers from Calling lake have put some thought into the camp program, yet I also want the program to act as a model for future camps. There are ongoing dilemmas surrounding the lack of local consultation and participation in the program development process. There is uncertainty, self doubt, and internal questions asking whether my directive style fits the participatory research mold.

I also have some concerns about the safety side of the program and will need to make sure all staff and the youth are aware of our health and safety obligations to Rediscovery. With regard to the research process, I recognize my plans of validating information obtained have been largely ignored except for occasional information being presented at our camp organizational meetings. I note also in my journal that it would have been more of a participatory project if the youth themselves had been interviewing Elders and collecting information to then develop their own camp program.

The rains fall from the sky in northern Alberta constantly for the week, swamping the access road into the camp, and filling Kammistekosik Lake beyond its edges. George suggests it would be impossible to get through to his cabin even on four wheel drive quads. We look for an alternative venue, but as the rains continue to fall I recognize the camp for the summer of 1995 is effectively over before it has began.

It is a time of personal frustration, and at our final organizing committee meeting, I realize Lisa too is shattered after her solid six weeks of planning and preparation. Tracy is initially angry at yet another initiative for local youth not happening, then jokes we now have a spare week to eat all the food. Immediately it is decided the food would be donated to the Bigstone Cree Nation in Wabasca for their forthcoming youth conference, with a little kept for a end of summer dinner for all the supporters of the camp and the youth who were to attend. We try and highlight some of the good things that have come from the experience before Tracy needs to leave.

Further Reflections

Lisa is still despondent after the meeting and I take the time to chat. When asking her how she feels about the camp not happening there is sadness almost to tears. Not having the camp is a disappointment for her, but I am slow to realize Lisa is soon to be out of a job as her contract expires at the completion of the summer. Hers has been a position she has put her heart and soul into and her reward was going to be the camp itself. We talk of her real successes, of rallying the community together and supporting the camp and I thank her for all her hard work behind the scenes.

The process of debriefing continues and I share a hearty dinner with Trevor, taking the opportunity to record his thoughts on the process of developing the camp. He shares his views on the camp being canceled and appears not at all disappointed...

> I'm really O.K. with the camp not happening this year. It would have been really nice to have gone out and done it... part of that for George and Nadine to see it happen.

There are insights to Trevor's limited involvement in the organization of the program, suggesting the six weeks of actual solid planning put into the camp would never be enough. We discuss reasons for the project not occurring and for Trevor it came down to insufficient time for planning and doing things right...

> ...better to do something well. I hate doing things in a rush. I've been holding back even from the first meeting, sort of like George and Nadine did. O.K. lets do it, but don't ask me to do it.

When asked about the outcomes of the project Trevor is full of praise for what was achieved through the process, especially from a financial perspective...

> What (Lisa) was able to do with fundraising absolutely blew my socks off. We would never have done that in (his old community). We have almost five thousand dollars in the bank.

Trevor is even more fired up about getting involved in the future. He shares his plans for a big camp project in 1996, incorporating the construction of an accessible wilderness center that is multi-use in scope. There is no doubt Trevor sees the Athabasca area as a great place to develop some major initiatives not just for youth but the whole community. He is optimistic about the future of wilderness camps for the area..

> When we make it happen next year its going to be a bigger project and a bigger deal. I'll have a couple of coordinators on by May... We'll probably have twenty kids working planning and constructing on this project, maybe from February on. In this community this is all new stuff, it's pioneering work. There's lots of interest in doing these camps. We'll be looking at the physical locality of the camp. For me that facility has potential as a healing center, for training and development, and not just working with youth.

We share ideas on the concept of Rediscovery, and I am aware Trevor still has concerns about the philosophy behind the organization and is uncertain a local camp should buy into the organization. I share that Rediscovery would be happy for the local community to do their own thing, and that in reality that the organization is all about assisting communities establish wilderness programs for youth based on the teachings local people feel are important. I also share a series of stories about Rediscovery communities being empowered to act politically in protecting local wilderness areas. As illustration I suggest that if local people felt it important to protect areas of the local forest from milling that hopefully the confidence developed by the community through successes in Rediscovery would empower them to campaign against AL-PAC and other milling operations. Trevor appears not at all keen to involve himself and the organization he works for in any local politics, and I can certainly understand the dilemma he is in.

The Decision No

The next few days are spent examining the root causes of the failure of the camp to occur. The journey takes me again to George and Nadine's home. I ask George eventually if he is disappointed the camp will not happen, and he suggests it is the creators wish for the camp not to go ahead. George recognizes the disappointment I hold and suggests when the creator feels the time is right then the camp will happen. He mentions again the negative experience of the camp at Rock Island Lake for the students and staff due to the weather and the lack of organization for the camp program. I ask if our level of preparation or direction for the camp may have assisted in deciding no. George is again adamant the weather was the sole factor surrounding the program not happening.

I admire the willingness of both George and Nadine to make the camp program a positive experience for all involved, and their ease at accepting the program will not happen in 1995. Yet I also wonder if they are saving face by postponing the Camp, for they are the camp Grandparents, and the camp was planned at their cabin. I sense they feel ownership for the camp and a responsibility for the students. I wonder if, in Native communities, it is better to not do something if it looks as though it won't really work quite as planned and also question if George and Nadine feel it would be better to do something well or not at all.

I am left pondering the constraints of my role as researcher / facilitator. There exists some personal doubt about the informal nature of the camp development process and I wonder if improving the level of my communication with the organizing group would have assisted George and Nadine understand their role would not be with the overall leadership of the camp. Similarly I question if George and Nadine recognized my willingness to take a leadership role, as an informal camp or program manager. Now the camp has been canceled I am also left wondering whether a more active stance would have facilitated a camp experience. If I had stood up at a meeting and outlined a clear program I wonder if that could have been enough to really get the enthusiasm levels through the roof and me being a little more proactive would have assisted the camp happen regardless of the weather. Perhaps outlining a series of wet weather activities for the organizing group to consider may have assisted with concerns they held.

It is personally frustrating to be left stranded, for only ten days ago it appeared nothing was going to stop us getting a program happening. Now it is something as unexpected as the weather halting the program not money or cultural issues, or a lack of enthusiasm or community support. However, the words of participatory researchers, practitioners, and the Rediscovery International Board echo in my mind. After a deal of soul-searching I conclude it may ultimately be of more benefit to the community for the camp not to run and for the organizing locals to be making even more of the decisions next time.

There is also some relief with the realization that we will not now have to go through the process of coordinating a camp. There was considerable concern, tension, and stress knowing I would ultimately be the one under scrutiny at the camp. In my heart I knew I would end up being the person coordinating the total program, something I had resigned myself to and had commenced planning for. I wonder if the organizing group secretly shared my own personal doubt but were not expressing themselves because we had not been as open or honest as perhaps we could have. In retrospect the sharing circles planned for youth and staff at the camp should really have commenced for the organizing group way before the camp was ever scheduled.

Respect and Protocol

Later George, Nadine and myself are joined by a couple of researchers working on behalf of the Arctic Institute and the Bigstone Cree Nation at Wabasca. They are interested in documenting some of the traditional ecological knowledge of the area and have come to recruit George to their team of informants. George has been recommended as one in the community with knowledge of local hunting and trapping areas, and as one with an intimate knowledge of local flora and fauna. It is interesting to sit back and observe the discussions and the requests for assistance.

There is a direct question put to both George and Nadine…'are you interested in working on this project?' Nadine is forthright in immediately saying no. George considers the request for some time before also saying no. When asked why George was not interested in being involved the reply is a now familiar one centering upon the importance of respect for the person you want something from… "This is the right way of asking for information, you have to respect the person." The researcher's assistant is a local who immediately responds "I told you so!", suggesting the youth had attempted to inform the researcher of the local protocol of giving tobacco. The researcher mentioned there would be tobacco offered at the first interview or meeting, followed by a report given to each Elder and a feast at the end of the project. George suggests a dinner at the end is not the way to go and that the researchers should be giving at the beginning.

I was pleased I had been there to observe another researcher attempting to gain research consent and involvement without first developing a rapport. My time spent getting to know folk within the community and letting them know my intentions was now obviously paying dividends. The incident suggested to me my style of research had followed a path of respect, and that my efforts to give tobacco when seeking counsel and information was appropriate. Follow the protocols was my reinforced message.

George turns to me and in front of the researchers asks if I think it is a good idea if he was to become involved in the local project. I reply "…it depends on what the information will be used for." I ask the researchers what will be happening to the information collected and a book is produced on a similar project further north. It is complete with glossy pictures, and I note the acknowledgments of the old people on the first few pages who have assisted with the project. It is obvious a similar book is planned for the Calling Lake area, outlining the cultural traditions, history, and assets of the local community. I suggest if the information is going to be retained in the community for use by the local people then it may be appropriate for George to be involved.

George says he will think about it, and the researchers do well by offering George time to mull their proposition over. From the outside I note the importance for researchers to not put local people on the spot and to provide time for responses to substantial requests for information. Get to know the local people first, share the information, sow the seed, then ask for permission by using the appropriate local protocols is my lesson for the day.

After the researchers leave, I thank George for the lesson I had been given on respect and that I was ignorant of those things sometimes. I present a piece of fungus I had collected in the bush and pouch of tobacco to George, mentioning that I hoped he wasn't offended by me forgetting to present them earlier when I asked about the camp not going ahead. George laughs, says thank you for the gifts, then asks Nadine if we should have a cup of tea now.

Over the tea I share with George and Nadine how very grateful I was for being made to feel so welcome, that their hospitality to me was wonderful and really made me feel at home in the community. I also share that they both remind me a lot of my own grandparents back home. With this Nadine comes over and joins the conversation, her smile beaming.

George asks me again about the researchers and if I thought it a good idea that traditional ecological knowledge should be documented. His concern is if the process of tanning a moose hide is written down then there would be a mass of people trying to kill the moose. There was also concern that non-locals would find out where the moose were and would start hunting in the area. It was obvious George was concerned about the degradation of the local forests and wildlife if the information got into the wrong hands.

Cultural Festivities

The discussion turns to a group of local youth who had just completed a four day fast in the bush. I am invited to a feast to be held in their honor and I accept. I ask how the fast will help the youth cope in today's world. "Oh it will help" comes Nadine's reply.

Later at the feast I am again asked by George what I think about the researchers request. It is obviously bugging him. I reply that it is up to him, but that in some places traditional ways of life are being lost as the old people die before being able to pass on their skills and knowledge. I suggest that it may be appropriate to write important things down for future generations, provided the community retains the information, that local people are involved with the research and writing, and that local protocols are respectfully followed. I wonder if I am perceived as being one who practices what he preaches.

I head over to Jeff and Rachel's house, where the feast will later be held, to find Rachel pushing the lawn mower and balancing other tasks in preparation for the feast. Jeff is fixing his car, so I end up mowing the lawns for Rachel. Afterwards I spy a beautiful birch-bark basket inside the house, which Rachel immediately offers me as a gift. I refuse to take it, not realizing the insult this is for Rachel. Though Rachel is insistent I take the gift the basket remains where it is.

The fast celebration is a great opportunity for me to hear from the youth, but they are remarkably quiet and shy about their experiences. I hear more from the Cree speakers about the fasts being offered to youth. Apparently the fasts were once an important and regular aspect of native life. The youth have only commenced the fasts locally during the past two summers, although youth and Elders have traveled elsewhere to experience sweats and fasts for a number of years. From the account of the Cree speakers, each participant has a number of things they will focus upon during the fasting experience and so each fast is a uniquely different experience. I internalize the fact that the community really has commenced a Rediscovery of their own.

Later we share a local soup delicacy. I slurp casually on the contents of my plate as all eyes are on me from around the room. There is laughter and a challenge for me to guess what sort of soup it is. Following the lead of others I take a second helping, much to the delight of the locals, before Nadine shares that I am drinking moose nose soup. She shares her soup cooking methods and it is indeed the nose of a moose that has been boiled many times with a few secret ingredients. I hold off taking a third helping and let the Cree speakers finish off the last of the delicacy.

Gift Giving

At the table I joke about how Rachel made me mow the lawns, after someone comments on how nice her yard looked. Rachel then tells everyone how I refused to take the birch-bark basket that she had offered me. George turns and tells me off, saying that I had to take it out of respect. It is a public telling off in front of the youth and adults present. George explains quietly to me later that night that the giving of gifts is a way of respecting people… "It is the Cree way, where if something is valuable to someone else it is good to give it away to them." Later I am presented yet again with a farewell gift from Rachel, this time a pair of moccasins hand-crafted by Nadine. They are moose hide and smelling of smoke from the curing process. I give Rachel a hug of thanks and an apology for offending her earlier in the afternoon.

That night I share the gift giving incident with Trevor, at whose place I am staying. He shares his experience in these matters, and of the burden many native people have of holding possessions others may view as valuable. Trevor further suggests people are often able to live more peacefully knowing they do not hold something other folks may not own. From the television in the background comes the lines from a Willie Nelson documentary… "When it's time to say good-bye and leave it all behind, the only things you get to keep are the things you gave away." The quote is a fitting one for the day and comes at a disturbingly coincidental time.

A Local Youth Conference

The following weekend I head north to Wabasca-Desmarais with Lisa and Tracy to gift the unused camp food to the local youth conference. Despite our efforts we are unable to encourage any local youth to go to the conference and I decide to take the opportunity to attend, after it is offered to me. The drive is a long, scenic one through the muddy, forestry road and my poor Toyota Tercel struggles with the deep wheel ruts.

The township of Wabasca-Desmarais is located on the shores of a wetlands area between the North and South Wabasca Lakes, and is North-East of Lesser Slave Lake. The area appears rich with birds, forest and wildlife. Approaching the residential area I can easily imagine why the hamlet-town is located where it is. I visualize the bush Cree surviving comfortably over past centuries in the adjacent forest and along the waterways, with tipi's erected and the hazy smoke of cooking fires.

According to the 1991 census there are 1571 Cree people living on the Bigstone Cree Nation Reserve. There is a community school, hospital, and town businesses, and the local houses appear in reasonable to new condition. The local economy appears to be dominated by forestry initiatives and AL-PAC has a strong presence in the town.

The conference is held at the local high school, and the food is delivered to the conference organizers. At the front gate I am introduced by Tracy as the Orloff Lake Camp Director to the local Member of the Legislative Assembly. The introduction makes me laugh, especially as the camp is not even to take place, and the M.L.A. and Tracy eventually understand the source of my laughter. The M.L.A. is a local Cree-

Metis man and is a controversial character in the eye of some local people, for he has been a central player in the forestry initiatives developed jointly with the Japanese government for the local area. From all accounts the initiatives have yet to gain widespread support from the people of the area and there are many of the older people who feel their forests have been sold out from under them by one of their kind.

Almost immediately the conference is opened. The M.L.A. is guest of honor and speaks fluently to those present in Cree, pausing only occasionally for brief translations into English. It seems obvious few of the youth present can themselves understand Cree, for the level of conversation amongst the audience fast rises. Second to the podium is a liaison officer for AL-PAC. His message is clear... "we can no longer use the forest as we used to. No more hunting, no more trapping for a living. We like to retain our cultural values but youth need to be aware of the cultural change. We must ask our Elders to prepare us for the cultural change." The words mirror almost exactly those given to me by Andy weeks earlier and are probably stock AL-PAC sayings. He goes on to suggest for youth to succeed they need to "get an education, graduate, and tell us you want a job."

Interactions with Youth

The speeches drone on for much of the evening as local dignitaries welcome the youth from the outlying areas. The youth themselves are restless and they come and go into the hall at will. It is obvious to me they are bored and they appear unconcerned about missing the messages given by their Elders. As an educator I see the conference needs to be more hands-on for youth to remain engaged and interested. The evening entertainment is a little better, for there is a slide show given by a local girl who was a successful dancer and who went to Hollywood to play a supporting role in the movie "Seasons of the Fall" alongside famous actors Brad Pitt and Anthony Hopkins. The glamour Hollywood stories and the slides captivate the youth present. I am certain a few of them get the intended message that every individual has the potential for undertaking a career they set their heart upon.

The presentation is followed by one from the local Metis dance group. Unfortunately a couple of the younger girls are embarrassed by being laughed at by other youth to the point they run out of the hall. I feel for those who have taken the risk to perform, and their embarrassment will have done nothing for the way they feel about themselves as native dancers. Regardless, a number of middle aged and elderly men and women join the dancers and make the entertainment more fun for those who chose to remain. I enjoy seeing my friend Tracy displaying an agility and confidence with the younger ones, and her laughter does much to lighten the situation.

The entertainment continues late into the evening, with a hypnotist keeping the group well entertained before a round dance kicked off the early hours of the new day. I retire, only to find my shoes have been borrowed (or stolen). I had taken them off in respect for the building I was in, following the lead of the old people who had entered the building before me. Unfortunately the hiking boot style was more in vogue with the youth than the other shoes left. As I wander to my tent near the lake with bare feet, I wonder if the offending youth would have considered the impact of his or her actions if it had been mid winter. I similarly question internally if the materialism involved with the taking of my shoes was a recent phenomenon or would perhaps have taken place historically. I lay wide eyed in my tent thinking of the situation, eventually wishing the person who has my shoes good luck with them. They had traveled many miles for me and were still in good shape, and I hoped the shoes would be well respected. In the back of my mind was the gift giving lesson I had been given by Rachel and George, and the new pair of moccasins I now possessed. I resolved to rise early and offer tobacco at the pipe ceremony the next morning in forgiveness of the youth with my shoes.

The night was interrupted around 3 a.m. by a group of youth near my tent smoking and playing loud music. Electing to go for a short walk until they disappeared I arose to the most amazing light show, as the northern lights were zapping colors across the sky. It was an amazing spectacle and after my walk I approached the partying youths to suggest they settled for the night. The air had that unmistakable fragrance of marijuana, and instead of wasting my breath asking them to quieten I mentioned what an amazing display the northern lights were providing. The youths were surprised with my accent, quickly butted out their cigarettes and took my lead to look skyward. The display appeared of little interest however. I returned to my tent pondering if it was the substances in the smoke, a lack of interest in natural things, or the fact they were used to the northern lights that made them seemingly disinterested in what was to me an awesome show of nature. Maybe they were trying hard to be cool amongst their peers. Regardless, the youth had the courtesy to turn their music off immediately.

Abiding by the Protocol

Arising early I am one of four adults at the pipe ceremony and note that no youth are present. I provide my tobacco pouch as a gift of strength for the youth at the conference and not for forgiveness. The Elder leading the ceremony is welcoming and elects to share information about the ceremony in English for my benefit. Many rounds of the pipe are made and songs sung in Cree. As we finish I am gifted hugs from the three male strangers, then escorted to the local restaurant for breakfast. It is an opportunity to satisfy their curiosities surrounding why I was in Northern Alberta and so far from home. I share of our plans for the wilderness camp at Orloff Lake and my research program with the local Elders. It is obvious the Elders had heard a camp was planned for the summer and that it had been foiled by the weather. The bush telegraph was certainly working. The Elders invite me to attend workshops they were presenting throughout that day.

The workshops take place in the school classrooms, with the youth sitting behind desks whilst the presenter stands at the front. To me the situation resembles what I would call traditional schooling. Regardless, I take the opportunity to sit in on one of the classes and am captivated by the messages provided. Later, after a cup of tea, I present "Smith" with a pouch of tobacco and ask him if he was willing to be a part of my research study, to share with me the very lessons he had just shared with youth. Smith was delighted I was interested in what he felt was important for youth to know today and was happy for me to record his next workshop and for the material to be utilized in any final report.

Smith is an elderly man, slightly built, and quietly spoken with his distinctive Cree dialect of English. In many respects he typifies my romantic images of a native Elder, although is bereft of any braids or feathers. His quiet manner has the youth immediately interested and he begins in Cree to later share… "My first language is Cree. It is very important we take in that what is given to us. We must always be thankful to our mothers our fathers, the ones that we have." He continues to speak in Cree, and I am surprised later to learn many of the youth present could in fact understand most of the words spoken.

Smith reinforces my images of native Elders being environmentalists and his messages to youth are clear…

> The four elements, we are all equal, the four elements come into the land. It is a rich land, but was richer one time. I cannot sell my people down the tubes, I cannot sell them trees for money. I have to protect or try to protect those trees for my youth, my kids, my children, my grandchildren, I cannot live in open air, I need trees like the trees need... like the animals need the trees, that is part of us as Indian people, where we get water and fish, where we get air that we breath, we don't want to breath poison gas…

The statement is an opener for an attack on local forestry initiatives and his stance against logging is explicit. He continues his environmentalist stance, and I wonder if the messages are for me or the youth or both...

> You'll have nothing to live with if I sell it down the line. These are the things I have to say. ALPAC might be a big machine, but there is nothing impossible, if I can get the unity, your life is one the line, if I get the people, you know when my moose are gone, your moose are gone too, when your fish are gone my fish are gone too, what do I live with? what do I drink?, do I buy water the great creator has given me? NO. Too many times we get caught in a book. Too many times we say 'just these' these will be O.K. But NO, we need to look at each other, not just one or two families, but everyone and we will all get a share. We need to be fair, when we are fair to ourselves we are fair with the people. Sometimes you gotta put yourself on the line… Nobody will take away my culture, no one will take away my songs

> cause I know them. I sing them. There is no price tag for my songs, just like there is no price tag for my logs my trees, they are not mine to sell them, there's no price for my water, for my people, I cannot sell my people and their future down the line. There are a lot of strong people who believe that. We can slow down production if we understand one another we can slow down production, but we have to work as a unit. When we speak speak with strength about culture, lets practice that.

There are other messages about respect: for women in the Bush Cree culture, for the Elders who know their herbs, for the animals when hunting, for all forms of education regardless of who wrote the books, and for the Elders who have all the wisdom any of the books can tell you. There are clear messages for youth not to be lazy, and to assist families when times are hard or people tired or sick. Analogies are regularly made and I witness the youth nodding often with understanding. At one time the youth are given the message to be strong hunters, but the underlying message is one of not being too cocky, of concentrating and doing any job well…

> In the old days people used to hunt on foot their fathers, our grandfathers, on foot, that's how they lived eh. ...we gotta walk out there and hunt every day like our grandfathers done and be proud of that… I sometimes miss my moose too, every day we hunt. We are too sure sometimes, never walking against the wind to the moose. Never be too sure till you knock it down,. Don't waste them bullets. Shoot it once and knock it down. That why our hunters, they are great hunters and still walking today. Use one shot that was important, That was the challenge. It wasn't easy.

Smith talks of his spirituality and the strength it gives him. He talks of the creator and of the importance in living life in a practiced, disciplined and focused manner. The messages for youth are clear..

> We should always prepare in the morning. Ask "am I prepared today for the day? Last night I prayed as long as I could. Today I had to prepare, to doctor myself to think like the eagle. I had to recap myself, doctor myself in my own way. I had to think from here (heart), the message, I cannot today be misleading. When you get overtired you gonna stumble, but when you body is ready your mind is ready too. Be strong, ... the Cree Indian, we are the Cree from the north. ...discipline yourself, prepare yourself. Try and be that person, that

> model. I'll try and be that hunter, that survivor, that Cree Indian. We have to walk our talk. We have to practice.

A Second Workshop

I find the workshop with Smith captivating. Later in the afternoon I join another, after first asking the Elder for permission to attend. The Elder, Francios, accepts my pouch of tobacco and spends time at the start of the session talking about respect, the importance of acknowledging the Creator, and of giving. I am introduced to the youth as someone who has shown respect, but I know the Elder is also sharing me a lesson of acknowledging the Creator when presenting tobacco which I had failed to do. I nod my head and Francios knows I hear his message.

Francios, like Smith, has equally strong words to share about the forestry initiatives in the area. Whilst I do not capture his words on tape, an article written by Francios appears in the Edmonton Journal a few weeks later and reinforces his messages…

> Greed and selfishness continue to thrive, while the aboriginal way of life is being sacrificed… I believe that returning to our roots, and practicing the traditional way of life offers the best alternative for the young aboriginal people of this province, and unless the environment is preserved this cannot take place. We must stand up and let our voices be heard.
>
> (The Edmonton Journal, September 20, 1995: A11)

Francios shares considerable detail of his philosophy of native spirituality; of the four directions, four seasons, and four races of humans; the transition from birth to Elder, and the significance of the circle in Cree culture relative to tipi's, sweatlodges, camps, pipe ceremonies, the moon and sun, and the medicine wheel. The youth appear interested but have little interaction with Francios. They remain behind the desks like they are in school whist Francios speaks at the front. It is the same model used by Smith, but the youth appear less interested. As soon as the workshop is over the youth move on. Afterwards Francios asks me how it was, meaning whether I got what I had hoped to from the workshop and we spend a long, long time talking about the planned camp at Orloff Lake. Over a cup of tea Francios talks of the importance of local leaders and Elders being involved. I ask him if there are people from Wabasca who may be interested in working with the youth from Calling Lake and Athabasca and he nods. We talk of the weather and how it impacted upon our plans, and Francios is confident a camp will happen when it is time.

Revisiting Orloff Lake

I am resigned to leaving the conference on the morning of the third day and return to teaching duties at the University in Edmonton. It is a long drive, and along the way I detour before Calling Lake to revisit Orloff Lake. I am able to locate the trail-head easily this time and spend an hour or so slogging through the mud to the lake. Shortly after I am sitting on the shores of the lake, listening to the sounds and soaking up the sunshine. I remove my boots and soak my feet in the water at the edge of the lake. Whilst the water level has dropped significantly on what it must have been, the lake is still surely flooded and the surrounding country is swamped. I realize George and Nadine were right to halt the camp for this year. Regardless, getting back to the lake is a time for reflection upon the journey of trying to assist the local people establish a camp. I can only think about what could have been and create mental images of camp activities happening there. After many minutes of contemplation I move onwards, bound for Edmonton. It is, for me, a suitable closure to an eventual experience, and one I shall never forget.

ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 4: TOWARDS A CURRICULUM OF REDISCOVERY

The traditional way of education was by example and experience and by storytelling. The first principle involved was total respect and acceptance of the one to be taught. And that learning was a continuous process from birth to death. It was a total continuity without interruption. Its nature was like the fountain that gives many colours and flavours of water and that whomever chose could drink as much or as little as they wanted to and whenever they wished. The teaching strictly adhered to the sacredness of life, whether of humans or animals or plants...

Arthur Solomon, a Nishnawbe spiritual teacher.

Introduction

Upon invitation I entered a rural community in northern Alberta and, as a student -researcher, was involved with assisting the local people develop a wilderness education program for their youth. Such a process involved not only the derision of a local wilderness education curriculum but also the empowerment of local people. Unfortunately the considerable energy and enthusiasm dedicated to the project by local people and myself was halted for reasons beyond the control of the community. During the planning component of this research and development challenge I could never be certain the project would come to fruition so as a risk management strategy I chose a thesis project with its primary mission the development of a locally-derived wilderness education curriculum, with the participation and guidance of local people. The establishment of such a local camp curriculum would be my tangible contribution to the community development process and would utilize my experience in the outdoor, environmental education field to synthesize the wisdom and thought of local Elders. Other energies would be spent whenever possible in a more facilitatory role to empower local people to the process of establishing their own camp program.

The challenges of such participatory, ethnographic work lay fundamentally with my immersion into the community and the subsequent decoding of cultural symbols, usually in the form of words, gestures, places, events, and objects, to better understand the meaning of the cultural situation (Spradley, 1980; Henderson, 1991). However, cultural knowledge is, as Spradley highlights, not just a collection of symbols but an intricate pattern or system of interrelating symbols. If I was able to decode these many and varied cultural symbols adequately, including their interrelationships, the result would be a wilderness camp curriculum representative of and unique to the local community. This chapter documents the process of analysis.

The Search For Curriculum Themes

The notion of 'community' suggests a group of people living together who share a common identity, and who hold a shared system of order and meaning. 'Meaning' itself is an all-encompassing word relating to the intellectual, moral and social values of the people, their common language, their understood social boundaries, and the agreed roles inherent in the community (Brown, 1989). One of the initial challenges would be to better understand the concept of community as it related to the local situation.

For the curriculum development aspect of this work I chose to examine cultural meaning specifically in relation to *the life skills, values, experiences, and knowledge community leaders felt were important for the education of local youth in a wilderness camp setting*. Data discovery, organization and analysis loosely followed Spradley's (1980) 'Development Research Sequence' to eventually draw themes from field notes, ethnographic observations, and interviews. The process of data discovery and interpretation tended to occur concurrently and was integral to a seven step search for universal themes and a camp curriculum. The details of this research process are documented below and an outline is provided in Figure B.

1. Community Immersion

Spradley (1979: 190) suggests the process of spending extended periods in a specific research environment is typically one used by ethnographers to expose cultural themes... "By cutting oneself off from other interests and concerns, by listening to informants hours on end, by participating in the cultural scene, and by allowing ones mental life to be taken over by the new culture, themes often emerge." I am fortunate to have spent time within the communities of Athabasca and Calling Lake, establishing rapport and getting to know a small number of local people well, observing the day to day summer routines of the people, and participating in a number of cultural activities. This commitment resulted in me better understanding some of the history and culture of the two towns, and the socio-cultural relationships amongst the local people. Two short concluding visits to Wabasca-Desmarais also exposed me to another township with a subtly different cultural orientation.

FIGURE B: SEARCHING FOR UNIVERSAL CURRICULUM THEMES

1. Community immersion
2. Community inventory and analysis
3. Generalizing data to rudimentary themes
4. Community validation of analysis
5. Establishing curriculum themes
6. Connecting interrelated themes
7. Towards a camp curriculum

Chambers (1992) advocates a relaxed approach to rural appraisal, stressing the importance of gaining rapport and not rushing in to help. From the experience of community extension personnel in a number of developing countries, the months or sometimes years of community immersion typical of classical ethnography's in predominantly native communities can be reduced with excellent results if the approach is genuine...

> ...when the outsiders' behaviour and attitudes are right, and participatory methods used, good rapport usually comes quickly. This is through not rushing, through showing respect, through explaining who you are, answering questions, being honest, and being interested; and asking to be taught, being taught...
>
> (Chambers, 1992: 46)

Immersion in things 'local' has allowed time on location to review data collected during the community experience, and to facilitate ongoing dialogue and observation whilst still in the community. These local experiences have also provided many opportunities to reflect upon my own lifestyle and perspectives in relation to those residing in and around the towns.

2. Community Inventory and Analysis

Typically community development projects commence with a community needs analysis, however in this situation I was uncertain if the community needed to be developed at all. Connotations exist around the use of the term 'development', especially as the antithesis is often seen in rural communities as the people being 'underdeveloped' and in need of being brought up to date with technology and westernized concepts. My intentions with this project were not to 'develop' the people nor to introduce aspects of my own culture into the community. As a critical research practitioner committed to a participatory methodological approach I strove to acknowledge and value the strengths, skills and participation of local people. Notwithstanding this point, in this situation local people had acknowledged the need from within for a form of community development and I had been invited into the community to assist local people with such a development. Therefore the term community development shall be used for the remainder of this work.

Moore (1991: 2) suggests a community exists "...when people who are interdependent struggle with the traditions that bind them and the interests that separate them, so that they can realize a future that is an improvement on the present." A preliminary community analysis would identify some of the traditions binding the people of Athabasca and Calling Lake, as well as the interests separating them. Taking the lead of Brown (1989) I developed a community analysis checklist to assist my investigations. This analysis involved four key areas: a 'cultural analysis', examining the local system of culture and its meaning; a 'structural analysis' examining the patterned integration between individuals and groups of individuals in the community; a 'spatial analysis' highlighting physical location of resources of the community, and; a 'temporal analysis' exploring the notion of the community existing before and beyond the 'here and now'. Appendix 2 highlights the specific questions utilized in the community checklist, as derived from Brown (1989).

Cultural Analysis

As highlighted earlier, Athabasca township has some 1965 permanent residents, and has a predominance of English speaking Euro-Canadians (Statistics Canada, 1994a). Less than eight percent of Athabascan's are of native origin, although the community supports a network of small rural villages and pockets of small Metis settlements. The remaining residents of Athabasca township and the surrounding areas appear to fit into a number of unique subcultures that includes Hutterite communities, university staff, ecological / alternative lifestylers, farmers, and oil, gas and timber industry workers.

Calling Lake and the surrounding area demonstrates a similar range of occupational diversity, although the number of local people in regular employment is exceptionally low. The Calling lake community is populated with predominantly Metis and Cree-Metis people, which the last census totaled at 382. A dialect of Plains Cree is still spoken by more than ninety five percent of the people older than 15 years, whilst the younger generation appear far more conversant in English (Statistics Canada, 1991). From my experiences in the Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais communities it is evident there is a current push for the Cree language to become more widespread in use. Wabasca-Desmarais is home of the Bigstone Cree Nation, where some 1571 people reside. There the use of spoken Cree is widespread, by both adults and youth. Whilst English is the predominant form of communication for the young people almost ninety percent are able to converse to a fundamental level in Cree (Statistics Canada, 1991). It is interesting to note from these statistics the influence of grandparents and parents upon these Cree speakers in both the Calling Lake and Wabasca - Desmarais areas, and the limited influence of School teachers for developing fluency for youth in their Aboriginal languages.

The customs, values, and traditions (culture) of various groups of humans are certainly not static and tend to grow from a people's heritage. From a cultural perspective there is some diversity between the three residential areas explored. The native people of Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais will tell a different history from their predominantly European neighbors in Athabasca. Regardless, there are degrees of enculturation for the local native people of each community, with some Cree and Metis having few explicit links to their cultural traditions whilst others have retained their language and appear to hold stronger links to their culture. Cree identity appears stronger in Wabasca - Desmarais than Calling Lake (Statistics Canada, 1991), perhaps reflecting the increased number of Cree residents, whilst Athabasca also has a pioneering heritage that has influenced the histories of Euro-Canadians of the town. To further generalize, local Metis display considerable occupational diversity with some adopting the more 'progressive', 'developmental' ways of their Euro-Canadian neighbors. Regardless, the roles for local people are not easily distinguished in any of the communities, although employment opportunities in Athabasca determine the standing of local people more-so than in the other areas.

The local newspaper in Athabasca does well in promoting any community events, important programs, problems and local success stories to the wider community. There is a diversity of interests of local people, attributed to the range of subcultures existing in the community. Outside of the newspaper there exists little real evidence of a strong community 'pride' in any of the communities, although the youth of Calling Lake were at times active in the celebration of cultural activities and a degree of enthusiasm was shared over the successes of the local softball team in Athabasca. Notwithstanding these generalizations, each of the communities hold a diversity of culture, language, occupation, and lifestyle that would likely replicate many small, rural Canadian communities.

One interesting insight is that both Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais have formalized community ideals around alcohol, with these communities refusing to allow the sale of liquor. Wabasca-Desmarais has a Band Council governing such issues in the community, whilst Calling Lake has an apparently informal, though effective, approach to local government. The reported incidence of alcohol consumption is significantly less in these communities than in Athabasca or communities across Canada, although alcohol abuse is a significantly acknowledged issue in both communities (Statistics Canada, 1991). Athabasca is formally governed by a District Council, and has liquor for sale through a hotel and a number of restaurants in the town.

Structural Analysis

A structural analysis focused upon identifying any key interaction and / or integration of the local people. From my observations I could not discern any high degree of 'belonging' for individuals to any of the communities. Certainly there were interactions between local people on a day to day basis, again typifying most small rural townships in any 'developed' country, but people appear to spend much of their time with family and with the identified subgroups of the area. A range of interests and potential conflicts exist in and around the community, particularly between groups supportive of local forestry and gas initiatives and those who are not. The environmental impact investigations conducted prior to the construction of the proposed AL-PAC mill a number of years ago appears to have divided the wider community, and the people remain either supportive or firmly against the milling activity.

People appeared to reside in Athabasca either for the economic opportunities available or for alternative, relaxed lifestyles, with both Athabasca and Calling Lake having a transient community of cottage owners. Despite the number of churches, community service groups, and sports clubs in Athabasca, there existed little additional evidence of community belonging, or any explicit benefits for belonging in the town. In contrast, families appeared to live in the communities of Wabasca and Calling Lake more for historical reasons, following the tradition of their families before them.

Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais have a high number of adult residents who participate in traditional Aboriginal activities (Statistics Canada, 1991), reflected by the number of sweat lodges, flags, and tipi structures observed. I witnessed at times the older people of the communities outwardly demonstrating pride in their culture. Tracy, in particular was visibly moved by the Metis dancers at the youth conference at Wabasca. Whilst the younger people mocked the dancers occasionally, their performance was the catalyst for a few adults to rise and join the dancers. At the same time there were youth who took opportunity to withdraw from the dance performance as it progressed, although this may be due more to embarrassment than a lack of pride. The Elders all talked with fondness of their youth and there was definite pride in 'family' and for those family members who had achieved during their lives.

Regardless, from a traditional perspective there were few times during my experience in the communities of Calling Lake and Athabasca where I was able to witness the blatant expression of pride and confidence by native youth as was demonstrated at the two Rediscovery International conferences I attended or the pow-wows visited during my time in Canada. Even the children of Calling Lake who were involved in a program of sweats and fasts were not at a point where they were comfortable talking of their experiences, let alone demonstrating a pride in themselves. In fairness I had not spent the time establishing the necessary rapport with these youth to differentiate shyness and personal pride.

Youth in Athabasca similarly demonstrated little pride in themselves or the community. During the summer months, youth were typically idle and reinforced mental images I held of many urban youth the world over. Comments from teachers at the Athabasca school suggested that there was not a great deal of integration between Native / Metis students and European children in their social groups. Similarly, George's comments about the importance of European kids viewing Indians as human indicated a lack of interaction and understanding between native and non-native youth. However I did not observe conflict or racial tension in the three townships nor witness a strong division between native and non-native youth. At a fundamental level the youth of the area appeared to relate well to each other, although comments from local school teachers suggested this was not always the case.

My observations did not take account of strong social boundaries in any of the communities, although they were likely in existence. Local people appeared to get on and live their own lives, interacting with whomever crossed their paths on a day to day basis in a manner typical of any small town. Time spent in Calling Lake highlighted segregated periods of community interaction, with community catering for the wedding of a local woman and for the funerals of two local seniors. At all other times, families appeared to keep to themselves and there was not a strong 'community' feeling noted in any of the three communities.

Spatial Analysis

Brown (1989) places credence on the physical resources of the community as providing important ethnographic information. For the establishment of a local wilderness camp this information proved critical and having a local woman as the camp coordinator was extremely valuable. She, as well as the Center Director, were able to recognize the physical resources necessary for the camp and to mobilize those resources for best advantage, whilst I was able to sit back and observe their work.

The Athabasca Native Friendship Center appeared to play an important role in assisting the local native people cope with the day to day challenges of living in the community. If nothing else the local native people are aware of the support the Center could provide if and when necessary. The Center was an important physical asset for these local people, acting as a drop in center, a place for social interaction over a coffee, as a place to obtain special assistance when necessary, and as place to feel at home in during the day. Other community service agencies, churches, and support groups operate for the local people and in a manner typical of most small rural communities.

The Athabasca river flows through the rural township of Athabasca and is a tangible link to the historical past of the area. More recently the railway and road systems have taken over transportation of people and goods to and from the community. Traditionally the area appears to have been wealthy with animals and plant life, with Bush Cree communities living in the Boreal forest and using the lakes, inland waterways, and land trails for travel. The forest itself supported these bush Cree communities with food, clothing, shelter and, with the arrival of European traders, a livelihood for some in trapping.

European settlers have transformed the prairie, converting sections of the forest to farmland, and introducing modern farm practices. Today these farms are heavily involved with cropping and the grazing of beef cattle in the summer, with some farms supporting beef cattle over the winter months in large scale and small scale feedlots. The township of Athabasca today supports the wider farming community and associated small scale industry with a smattering of retail shops and conveniences. Natural gas is extracted locally at many sites and a number of gas exploration and extraction companies are active in the area. These companies contribute significantly to the local economy through wages and salaries but are essentially national and multinational corporations with profits going outside of the community. Similarly the development of the large AL-PAC pulp mill nearby has benefited the community economically through wages and salaries, but with profits likely going offshore.

The skills of the local people vary considerably and there exists occupational diversity throughout the greater Athabasca region. Predominant in the rural region would be the more manual skills associated with a people economically attached to the land. With the development of the Alberta-Pacific pulp mill north and east of the Athabasca township has come a diversity of people associated with extracting, transporting, and processing timber for export. The local university in Athabasca, a facility focused upon correspondence studies, has attracted educators and academics to the area. The level of education of current residents of Athabasca is certainly well in excess of the nation rural community average (Statistics Canada, 1994a).

There is also a high degree of unemployment in the greater Athabasca area, a factor supporting the recent pulp mill development project and the likelihood of employment opportunities for local people. Further north at Wabasca-Desmarais, unemployment levels are far higher than the fifty eight percent national average for status Indians living on reserve (E.S.P.C., 1994). The high level of unemployment in the area has resulted in a conflict of interest for many local people between the development of the AL-PAC pulp mill or retaining traditional ways of living with the surrounding forest.

None of the communities of Athabasca, Calling Lake or Wabasca could be regarded as affluent, although like many rural communities there is some evidence of a range of income levels. Wabasca-Desmarais reports more than seventy percent of working adults earning less than ten thousand dollars per year (Statistics Canada, 1991), whilst the average income for Calling Lake working adults is closer to fourteen thousand dollars per year. The people of Athabasca are wealthy in comparison, though the township appears dependent upon the success of the rural sector for prosperity and has apparently been depressed economically over recent years. Regardless, more residents of Athabasca townships are employed on a permanent basis rather than the predominance of part-time work opportunities in Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais.

The standard of housing in each of the communities varies, but I witnessed no blatant examples of wealth through the construction of massive houses. Whilst some families appear to be doing adequately financially there are likely a number of families well below the national income average and near the poverty line.

Calling Lake has a number of residents living off reserve as status Indians, and there is also the Jean Baptist Gambler Reserve (IR 183) separated slightly from the rest of the community. Overall the standard of housing in parts of Calling Lake is poor, though there are some more modern but not extravagant homes. The Bigstone Cree Nation reserves in Wabasca-Desmarais (John d'Or Prairie Reserve, Wabasca IR 166, Wabasca 166B, Wabasca 166C, and Wabasca 166D) similarly have homes that appear adequate though not extravagant. The reserves of Calling Lake and Wabasca do separate the people of the immediate area from their neighbors, although I am uncertain of the impacts of that division.

Temporal Analysis

With a relaxed, short term community appraisal it is important to acknowledge that the community has existed before and shall exist after any analysis. I have written earlier of the rich history of the Athabasca area as documented by Europeans since their arrival. There is a wealth of documented local history, but little on the history of the native people in the area. From my observations and discussions with Elders I was not aware of a strong oral history held by local people, although feel certain this important aspect of traditional Cree culture would be exposed if and when the circumstances were right. None of the Elders I met talked of creation stories or sacred stories as appropriate for sharing in a local camp curriculum, but there was often insights given to the importance of respecting the ways of the past and ancestors. The high number of residents of Calling lake and Wabasca-Desmarais participating in Aboriginal activities suggest these aspects of Cree and Metis-Cree life would eventually permeate any local wilderness camp program. There are some local traditions Elders have explicitly suggested as important for sharing in a camp situation, particularly the skills of living in the bush, sweats and fasts. I am certain local oral traditions would emerge during a wilderness camp experience, for the area does have a rich history for native and non-native people alike. If the conditions were appropriate, if local leaders were heavily involved in a local camp, and if the youth involved were receptive to acknowledging and appreciating the diversity of local history, a traditionally- rich camp program would likely evolve.

There is evidence of a vision for establishing youth oriented programs in the community of Calling Lake. George and Nadine have run camps before and talk of the possibility of a permanent wilderness facility. Charlie too talks of his dream for a survival style camp where there can be some form of community income, provided the community is not selling their culture. There are goals for the youth of Calling Lake to speak more Cree and to follow more traditional approaches to education. Calling Lake appears to have the skills and leadership to implement such a vision to reality. Similarly Athabasca, through the leadership of the Native Friendship Center leadership, has a number of plans for community activities for youth and adults alike. It is apparent the community is supportive of such endeavors and may be able to generate the financial assistance for the growth of such programs.

The wider community is never-the-less dependent to a large degree on outside assistance. Welfare assistance programs make a significant contribution to the economic survival of local people. The first step taken by the Elders of Calling Lake and Athabasca, when confronted with the challenge of raising funds for the wilderness camp project, was to investigate welfare and other government funding sources for assistance. Big businesses operating in the communities, such as the AL-PAC consortium and various gas extraction companies, have also been approached for financial assistance. These businesses have provided an alternative level of dependency for local people as employees. Their financial destiny is, to a degree, determined from outside the community by company managers likely in bigger cities. The ALPAC mill has created employment for local people, although some technically oriented positions appear to have been allocated to expert outsiders. Similarly AL-PAC has facilitated entrepreneurial opportunities where local people have invested in large forestry machinery, for the harvesting and transportation of logs. However it now appears the supply of forestry services has at times exceeded demand and kept some equipment and manpower under-utilized. This has created a different level of dependency, for these local business people are indebted to financial institutions as they struggle to survive in business.

It is difficult to determine if the cultural and physical assets of the wider community are being accumulated or depleted. The Athabasca area appears to be reliant upon the farming, natural gas, oil, and forestry industries for economic survival. It appears there is a changing level of power and control within the larger community, with big business investing in developmental projects and capitalizing on the richness of natural resources of the area. Whether the community will benefit from these outside-generated initiatives in the longer term is open for conjecture.

3. Generalizing Data to Rudimentary Themes

From my community immersion, the corresponding community analysis process, and initial interviews with community leaders I was then able to generalize data into four main areas...

1. Elders' perspectives on youth;
2. My observations of local youth, their characteristics, and the contrasts between Calling Lake and Athabasca;
3. My own perspectives on strengths, comparisons, and contrasts between the communities of Calling Lake and Athabasca, and;
4. My observations of Elders.

Elders Perspective on Youth

Breaking the Stereotypes: Elders expressed the need for native youth, as well as adults, to be accepted by their non-native peers. George viewed the camp experience as ideal for non-natives to get to know their peers, to better understand their cultural similarities as well as differences, to experience the native way of doing things such as sweats and fasts if they wanted, and to assist non-native youth to better understand, acknowledge, and appreciate the human-ness of their native friends. Breaking the negative stereotypes held towards Indians was important. For George, Euro-Canadian youth needed to view Indians not just as drunks on the street but as living humans. Similarly, there was a desire for the youth to be successful in the community, to fulfill valuable roles in modern society and to not be viewed as second rate citizens.

Links to the Past, for the Future: Elders have identified the importance of links to the past for youth as strengths for the future. There is a need for youth to learn their history and traditions. They need to know who they are, and who their ancestors are, the traditions of their ancestors, and the special skills of their ancestors. It is acknowledged that knowledge of ones own culture will be a crutch that will hold up youth in periods of adversity.

Respect: For George and Smith especially, but also Charlie and the Cree Speakers of Calling Lake, the issue of respect is central to the social, moral, intellectual, and spiritual growth of youth. Whilst it appears from the comments of Elders that youth are often disrespectful, at no stage are the youth themselves blamed for their lack of responsibility. Rather the parents of the youth, and themselves, were to be blamed if anyone. Derogatory comments, when expressed by the Elders, were more common around the breakdown of the family unit, the lack of interest in hunting for food or growing vegetables, the influence of alcohol, bingo, and drugs on the parents, and the lack of money and food around the house. Some of the Elders acknowledged that youth knew right from wrong, but that it was the outside influences and the circumstances affecting youth that lead them to adopting socially unacceptable behaviors..

Breaking the Bonds of Dependency: The women Elders, Tracy and Nadine, viewed changes to the family lifestyle as essential for the future of youth. Whilst acknowledging the hopelessness of some local family units, the women Elders saw today's youth as having a brighter future through breaking the bonds of dependency. Social welfare was not construed as a good idea for youth. Tracy in particular was both saddened and critical of her son being unemployed and unable to secure a regular job. It was the hope of these two women that a camp would be one small step towards youth achieving, feeling good about themselves, setting themselves targets and being successful in today's world. These themes were paralleled by Smith with stories for youth of the importance of personally hunting the moose, taking up the challenges, and being successful.

Developing the 'Self': Respect for 'self' was privileged by Elders as important for youth. With such respect would flow respect into other aspects of the lives of youth. Traditional education appears to have centered more upon the individual and their needs than modern education does today, but with individuals contributing to society in a significant way through the process of self realization. This leadership was an important and central outcome of traditional education, facilitating the nurturing of the 'self' towards community leadership and into elder-hood. Youth need to feel good about themselves and to develop a respect for themselves before they will be able to contribute to society in a tangible way. It was envisaged that a wilderness camp would provide a supportive environment where youth could feel good about themselves.

Youth, The Leaders of Tomorrow: There is no doubt that community Elders are looking to the youth of today as the leaders of tomorrow. This message was repeated often during the Youth Conference at Wabasca, and mentioned often by Elders interviewed. Elders want youth to acknowledge the responsibilities of leadership, and that each individual has the potential to become a leader if they work towards that goal.

Observations of Youth

Opportunities for spending extended periods with youth did not eventuate, and observations were limited to time spent in the communities of Athabasca and Calling Lake during the summer school holidays, and during the Wabasca Youth Conference. From these observations, the following three insights were gleaned...

Doing Something: Like most youth in rural and urban areas, local youth were at a loss regarding how to fill their summer vacation. The time spent around the Youth Center was great for hanging out and catching up with peers. However the youth need activities beyond video games, music, and pool. Youth appear bored and ready for excitement. My brief discussion with youth during the baseball tournament suggested that canoeing would be an activity they would be interested in, and that youth may respond well to experiential activities engaging the mind and body in some fashion. They will not cope well with extended periods of listening to the words of Elders or other adults, as witnessed at the Wabasca Youth Conference. However, they may warm to listening progressively as their curiosity for learning is stimulated, and when they recognize and acknowledge the wisdom of the Elders.

Active Living: Smoking is prevalent in all three communities amongst youth and at a level beyond merely 'being cool'. I often wondered where the money for cigarettes came from, as many youth seemed to always have a butt in their mouth. Youth do not appear to have active lives, although this contradicts the self-reported activity level of youth aged four to fifteen years in Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais (Statistics Canada, 1991). I saw little evidence of youth being active, except for the few locals involved in the baseball tournament and a little backyard basketball. Youth appear to need healthy, exciting alternatives to their current lifestyles.

Natural Spaces: Youth from Athabasca appear not to be overly interested in their natural surroundings, contrasting somewhat with youth from Calling Lake who seemed to be happy spending time in the surrounding bush. I wonder how out of touch youth from the towns are with nature, and how receptive they would be to spending ten days or even two weeks in a wilderness camp situation in the summer. Making links for all youth to the local history, culture, and traditions regardless of ancestry may be valuable in providing insights to the wilderness pioneering and living skills of their ancestors.

Community Strengths, Comparisons, Contrasts

Brown (1989) suggests a community analysis will expose both the traditions binding the people of a community and the interests separating those people. This has not necessarily been the case in this instance as the three communities under investigation all differ in many ways, and at times significantly. The biggest conflicts of interest in the community exist around the forestry, oil and gas industries. Local people have taken a stance to either support or reject these initiatives. There appears no middle ground surrounding the activities of AL-PAC in the community, with evidence of local people extremely supportive of the milling activities and others committed to minimizing the ecological impacts of the mill. AL-PAC is a significant interest separating local 'community'.

A cultural analysis suggests there are many historical community strengths that include the native traditions and history of the area and a rich Euro-Canadian history. Theoretically there should exist some feeling of belonging for folk who have lived in the greater community for some time, as well as opportunity for youth to rediscover their roots regardless of their cultural background. The diversity of culture in the community can only be a strength, provided these strengths are perceived as such, and are acknowledged and appreciated by all local peoples. This perhaps is the biggest challenge for any Rediscovery-style wilderness camp developed in the community.

My difficulty identifying and involving community Elders highlights the lack of easily identifiable native community leaders in the communities of Calling Lake and Athabasca. AL-PAC has played a role in this process. Cultural advisors have been employed by the company to convince local native people the mill is a local asset. Many of these advisers employed by AL-PAC were once local Aboriginal leaders, and perhaps Elders in training or Elders in their own right. Whilst my work included discussions with an AL-PAC cultural advisor none of the AL-PAC staff were willing to take a leading role in the establishment of a local wilderness camp.

Community leaders and Elders from Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais present a vision for a more community-based education in the future for their youth. Such a vision is not distinctly different to the organizational belief framework of the Rediscovery International Foundation, and the evidence of local cultural activities such as sweats and fasts for youth suggest the elements of a Rediscovery program already exist in the community. Evidence of such traditional, cultural activity suggests Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais may be better positioned to develop a formalized Rediscovery-style program in the not too distant future.

Considerable occupational diversity exists throughout the region, and some social distinctions apparent relative to the professional and manual type employment sectors people are associated with. There also appears little integration between those people dependent upon welfare and those in regular employment, nor between the sub-cultural groups existing in the wider community. There is potential for allowing local youth to better understand the variety of perspective and status of others in their immediate area through a wilderness program that is inclusive for all.

The Athabasca Native Friendship Center is ideally placed to assist the Athabasca community become more understanding and accepting of differences and strengths of local people. As a non-profit organization the Center is able to attract funding from philanthropic organizations and local businesses, and it has considerable skills for this through the current Center Director and the Camp Coordinator. The business community is particularly supportive of initiatives for youth, as demonstrated by the considerable support offered the camp project. There exists great opportunity to develop initiatives for the community through the Center.

Whilst the wider community appears generally accepting of such youth initiatives, there exists some conflicts of interest between groups and individuals. Community traditions and modern developments will always oppose each other, as highlighted by various perspectives' on the development of the AL-PAC mill in the area. It is essential for people to be consulted from all sectors of the community and some consensus reached on any planned youth initiative. This may lead to local people becoming directly involved in a community project, and local traditions and protocol being respected during the process.

Elder Needs

It was evident through discussion with local community leaders and Elders that they hoped that their youth would be successful and respectful human beings, just as any parent and grandparent likely would. George and Charlie, in particular, were very keen for local youth to be respectful and proud of themselves, respectful of others, and of their surroundings. The success of local youth was to be seen as a reflection of themselves as community leaders, as a mirror of their leadership. Similarly, youth heading off the social rails were viewed as a reflection of the parents and grandparents of those youth. There was an obvious commitment and personal responsibility demonstrated by Charlie, George, Tracy and Nadine, toward assisting their youth being successful. Such responsibility reflected much of the literature around traditional approaches to education.

Central to the success of youth in the modern world appeared to be links established to the history and traditions of past ancestors. Elders and leaders look towards their past experience and traditions to empower youth. Charlies comments on the crutch that culture provides youth in times of adversity reflected metaphorically the words of other local leaders. Andy was particularly convincing in his emphasis on local activities being presented by local leaders / Elders. The Elders from Calling Lake were focused upon ensuring youth had some form of cultural crutch to lean on if necessary. These Elders, I believe, hoped youth would adopt some of the practices that had assisted them in times of personal crisis.

Elders also desired to share their wisdom and knowledge with adults as well as the youth, and to have a role in community. There appeared a desire for Elders to be recognized for the experiences and knowledge they had collected over their living years. The notion of learning being a life-long process was reflected, and Elders demonstrated the importance of being valued. Respecting those experienced in years was a theme evident from discussions with leaders in Calling Lake and Wabasca. Respect of Elders is an obviously important aspect of northern Cree culture, and local Elders have repeatedly though subtly reinforced this.

4. Community Validation of Analysis

Under the critical paradigm researchers are motivated to move beyond solely understanding cultural meaning for themselves. Their desire is to raise the consciousness of the local people to the plight of their own circumstances and to empower them to improve the conditions of their own life, so they can act on improving power imbalances within their newly constructed reality.

Bottom-up participatory research strategies are designed to involve local people in every stage of the research process (Reason, 1994; Chambers, 1992; Uphoff, 1991). It is therefore assumed with a community oriented project that local people have been trained for data collection and the conceptualization process. Those local persons involved will have an understanding towards the quality and accuracy of the data gathered and should have a role to play in the way the data is then categorized (Cornwall et al, 1994). Likely there will be some form of data analysis plan set up by the community group with many projects having the input of Elders, working in counsel or an advisory capacity to ensure important cultural traditions are being respected and acknowledged. Such a process would also reinforce the Elders important role within the community.

My research plan did not have local people conducting preliminary data collection, but it was envisioned those Elders involved in the interview process would play an important role in ensuring the data collected and analyzed on community was validated, amended or rejected in its entirety. For this study to retain its critical orientation there were three stages planned for community validation of research results.

In reality my plan ran differently, with the Elders involved in validating themes on an individual basis rather than meeting for the purpose of communal validation of preliminary data collection and analysis. At opportune moments the observations, inferences, and generalizations I produced were passed to local Elders for comment and constructive review. Despite being relatively explicit on the desire for feedback on the process, Elders were not willing to be 'critical' of my insights. Rather there were congratulations offered and general support for the process to continue, especially when Elders perceived the information as being valuable in the establishment of a camp.

At no stage were any Elders willing to discuss any of the 'problems' facing youth, despite general confirmation from the local school counselor that there were issues facing youth that needed to be addressed. The Aboriginal Community Profiles of Calling Lake and Wabasca-Desmarais (Statistics Canada, 1991) reported a high degree of concern held by local adults regarding family violence, youth suicide, sexual abuse, drug abuse and alcohol abuse. Yet this concern was not expressed by any of the Elders consulted. Cherokee leader McClellan Hall provides some insight to this lack of explicit concern by Elders...

> An example of how thinking and then speaking from a particular viewpoint can influence outcomes came to me years ago when I worked on the Navajo Reservation... and brought in a veterinarian. ...He knew a lot about animals but little about Navajos. When he got to the part about vaccinations, he said that people should vaccinate their sheep because it will prevent soremouth, blackleg, and several

> other diseases sheep can get. Just about the worst thing you can do in a traditional situation is to talk of all the negative things that can happen. Instead he could have said: People should vaccinate their sheep because they will live longer, they will be healthier, they will have bigger babies etc...
>
> ... I'm afraid we take the same approach as the veterinarian in our interactions with youth. The research is now telling us, just as an example, that the prevention programs that provide a lot of information about drugs actually showed an increase in use of drugs. Our Elders knew this would happen. We have learned from the traditional people that there are certain negative topics we are not supposed to discuss directly with young people.
>
> (Hall, 1996: 35)

Charlie, George and Tracy were convinced the camp should not involve 'at-risk' youth and repeatedly shared the importance of providing opportunities for 'good' students, so that future camps could become a reward for student achievement. These Elders appeared either unwilling to address the issues impacting upon some of the local youth or chose to ignore the issues and to focus upon other important aspects of youth development.

From the positive support and praise from the Elders involved I felt very comfortable proceeding with the ongoing data collection process. With the rapport developing between us I looked towards the Elders' increasing involvement as the project continued, especially once they became more familiar with the research and data collection process.

5. Establishing Curriculum Themes

A wall chart some ten feet long served to record the process of transforming data from expanded field notes, which included observations, interviews and discussions, and my personal journal. As domains were established record cards were produced and manually filed into envelopes with general headings. Cards were reclassified when envelopes became too full. The headings eventually became rudimentary themes for a camp curriculum. These themes, in turn, developed their central focus as the fostering of "SELF". That is, each theme appeared to center upon fulfilling the potential of each individual involved in the planned wilderness education program.

Self is a central theme that permeates the literature in the field of experiential education. Joplin (1985) stresses such a personal orientation in experiential programs, whereby learners are seen as beings with the ability to feel, value, and perceive, and where the individual, rather than the group, is emphasized. Proudman, from Chapman et al (1992), similarly points to experiential learning as a series of critical relationships interacting dynamically during an experiential program between the learner and self, the learner and teacher / facilitator, and the learner and the learning environment.

Democracy advocates such as Dewey (1938) and Friere (1972) would suggest such a 'self-in-society' camp should be a microcosm of the greater society, but where the individual through his or her experiences would contribute collectively to ensure the society was a more democratic one. Elders agree with this process, suggesting the growth and development of 'Self' is one key pillar for such a democratic community. Whilst camp activities would often be group oriented, the focus would ultimately be more personal and where the nourished 'self' could later contribute beyond the camp experience to society in some tangible way.

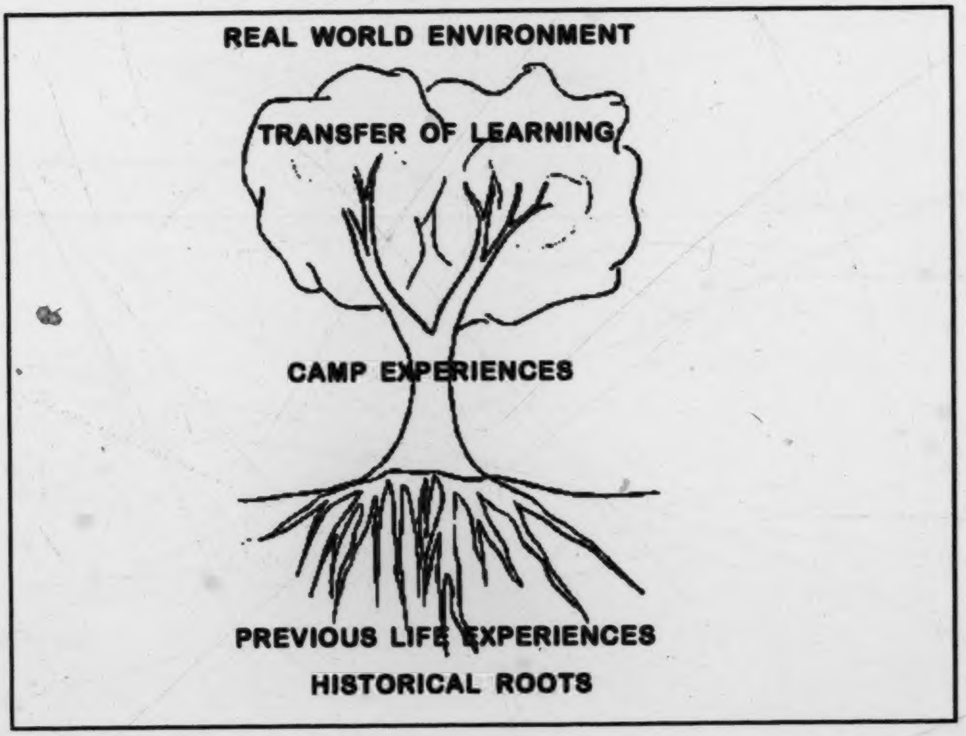
The Elders look to the wilderness camp situation as an opportunity for each youth to immerse himself or herself in an environment where all the conditions necessary for growth exist. There is a holistic, integrated, interconnection between all the themes identified as impacting upon the 'self' and these themes cannot be taken in isolation from each other. Therefore the camp situation ideally would involve full immersion and learning in an environment catering for the physical spiritual, intellectual, and emotional self.

The Tree: A metaphor for growth and change

The growth of ones intrapersonal 'self' could easily be represented by the growth of a sapling into a mature tree, with the development of the tree influenced by the environmental conditions impacting upon it. Where there is support, adequate food, warmth, shelter from the elements, mental and physical stimulation, and encouragement from those in the immediate forest the sapling will thrive. Taking one or more of these factors away may see the tree not maturing to its full potential.

Fostering the potential of self, using the tree metaphor, requires facilitating the growth of all roots, trunk, branches, twigs and individual leaves. Figure C depicts the tree as a metaphor for the growth of 'Self'. The self is a journey from the here-and-now to some future endeavor, or the growth of a sapling into maturity in an experiential fashion. Such a journey accentuates the notion of learning as a life long process, from birth into Elder-hood.

FIGURE C: THE TREE AS A METAPHOR FOR THE GROWTH OF 'SELF".


REAL WORLD ENVIRONMENT
TRANSFER OF LEARNING
CAMP EXPERIENCES
PREVIOUS LIFE EXPERIENCES
HISTORICAL ROOTS

The roots of the tree represent the previous life experiences and traditions impacting upon the 'self' prior to and during the camp experience. The trunk represents the series of activities and experiences a camp program may provide, with the branches and leaves fostering opportunities for reflection and application, or the transfer of learning, to new environments. The future is depicted as the real world environment and represented by the space surrounding the leaves and branches. Therefore, experiences from the camp situation would be reflected upon in relation to past experiences, and would be transferred or applied to some future experience.

A Growing Forest

As the tree develops it shall play an increasing role in providing the necessary conditions for growth for others in the forest. Participants, as trees of self, do not grow in isolation during the camp process. Rather each tree is subject to the same supportive conditions for growth. There shall be an extended family environment created during the camp experience that shall safeguard the physical, cultural, and emotional safety of participants. Regardless, as in everyday society, youth shall likely grow at different rates and contribute differently to the growth of others in the forest.

Elders have reinforced the strategy for nurturing individuals so that they, in time, can contribute their own style of leadership in later life. Couture (1985) identifies some of the characteristics of Native education, primarily for the purposes of non-native educators, and highlights the primary concern for fostering the 'self' and the process of being - becoming a unique person in a community situation. Such education, Couture (1995: 181) highlights, does not typically occur in an individualized fashion but requires a trust in self and others, and "...a sense of oneness with all dimensions of the environment."

The camp 'pedagogy' shared by Elders is a holistic one, reflecting the words of Couture above and integrating the disciplines of cultural, environmental, and adventure education into a dynamic approach to outdoor leadership. Elders reinforce many of the characteristics and virtues of experiential education, suggesting the ultimate ends of the camp educational experience are with improving the conditions of the people in society. Like many experiential education theorists and practitioners, local Elders are concerned about the concientization and empowerment of local people.

Curriculum Themes

Elders have identified many important concepts and locally significant teachings necessary for the growth of 'Self' in the wilderness camp situation. These concepts are holistic in scope, contributing to a number of different, though integrated, aspects of outdoor education. In order to investigate these concepts in greater depth they have been reduced to eight key curriculum themes. However, it is important to acknowledge the integrated-ness of each theme with the others that have been identified. Themes have been developed from the research stories presented in the previous chapter and the five sequential steps for identifying curriculum themes outlined above, and these are outlined below.

Active Living

Henley (1989) identifies the benefits of youth being active in a wilderness program and views direct experiences in the outdoors as important components of existing Rediscovery camps. Such experiences may include morning activities and exercise, adventure activities and pursuits, procuring, preparing and eating healthy foods, and the moving and living skills necessary for existence in the natural wilderness environment. Local Elders similarly suggest the importance of youth being kept healthy and active during a local camp experience. Tracy speaks regularly of the benefits she has personally gained through physical activity, particularly with competitive and recreational sport, and advocates youth being physically active in a camp situation as a means of coping in today's world. Personal enjoyment, interaction with others, coping with presented challenges, and opportunities for personal and group success are all realistic outcomes of being active at camp, according to Tracy. She suggests the positive feelings generated through being active at camp would hopefully transfer to everyday lives following the wilderness experience.

George is similarly adamant that youth need to experience getting up early in the morning and to celebrate each new day by immersing themselves into their surroundings, as a means of respect for the new day and for acknowledging the Creator. His ideal of going fishing early each morning was to be a form of role modeling for youth and other camp participants or leaders, as well as an opportunity for personal enjoyment.

Experiential educators would suggest that effective transfer does not automatically occur merely as the result of 'experiencing' an experience (Joplin, 1985; Knapp, 1992). Both Tracy and George point to repeated positive experiences as contributing to active lifestyle choices in their own right. Therefore the reflection and application phases of a typical experiential learning cycle[7] would be internalized by youth through repetition of physical experiences during the camp program as well as through deliberately planned times of reflection.

Charlie speaks of the importance of youth being able to walk for a day through the bush and to know how far they have traveled. Being active outdoors has been an important aspect of Charlies life and he sees virtue in youth experiencing traditional activities for themselves. Knowledge of safe travel and survival skills in the bush are camp elements Charlie, Tracy, Nadine, and George agree are vital for youth. Such knowledge appears not so much for survival in the bush but to give the youth a number of important connections to their past, to get them feeling confident in where they are heading and what they are doing. Elders are looking to the transfer of such bush lore and confidence, as important lessons about 'self', for youth to future situations.

My own observations of local youth reinforce the importance of programmed activity opportunities during a wilderness camp experience, especially activities that will captivate the involvement of students without them necessarily acknowledging the physicalness of the activity. The high incidence of smoking amongst youth suggests that they will not be ready for high intensity physical activity, and that active living components will need to be introduced in a sequential, progressive manner. The youth appear to be bored during the summer months and will enjoy being involved and active, just as I was when scraping the moose hide and plucking the goose at Fort Chipewyan. Getting youth actively engaged in camp activities will potentially capture their interest to a degree where they seek changes to their active living state beyond the camp experience. Follow up programs of outdoor, physical activity may be essential to keep any enthusiasm for such outdoor activities ongoing.

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[7] See Nadler, R. and Luckner, J. (1992) Processing the Adventure Experience: Theory and Practice.[Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt] for a diagramatical overview of an experiential learning cycle derived from a range of experiential education literature.

Elders appear equally confident that the learning of new skills and the learning of traditional skills will each contribute to building the 'self'. From my own experience teaching outdoors, youth appear to enjoy learning new skills. Ewert (1989) similarly suggests the learning of skills can potentially lead to an enhanced self confidence and self efficacy. Closely associated with skill development is the importance of having a good, positive experience whilst learning. Charlie and George, in particular, spoke often of the need for youth to enjoy themselves and for the camp activities to be enjoyable. That the camp was postponed, then ultimately canceled due to the potential of the weather transforming the experience into a negative one, is itself an indication of the importance George and Nadine placed upon positive outdoor experiences for youth. Having an enjoyable time together was seen by George as a way for non-native youth to see native youth as human, and for youth to view each other as all equal. George was particularly interested in the outcomes for shared positive experiences across cultures.

Elders do not make reference to drugs and alcohol, despite comments by school teachers suggesting there is a local prevalence of the use of such illegal substances. Adventure provides alternatives to highs generated from substance abuse, but it is difficult to determine if this has been consciously acknowledged by the Elders.

Food procurement is an important aspect of established Rediscovery camps (Henley, 1989) and local Elders have acknowledged the collection of herbs from bush, growing vegetables, and catching fish as exciting program possibilities.

Being Strong

Youth are encouraged to take personal strength from a local camp program. Such strength is not so much in the physical sense but more in terms of leading, following, listening, observing, planning, communicating with others and themselves, and embracing the importance of community through teamwork. Francios is particularly encouraging of youth setting clear goals for themselves and strategizing to achieve their goals. His analogy with skillfully and strategically hunting the moose can be applied to any endeavor undertaken by youth. George similarly used the metaphor of geese flying in formation and honking encouragement to each other to highlight the potential for cooperative strategy in reaching communal ends during the camp program.

The special skills involved with listening, planning, developing strategy, and risk taking can be nurtured through program of adventure based learning opportunities. As Priest (1990; 1986) points out interpersonal and intrapersonal growth are the key ends of adventure education. Whilst cooperation with camp related activities is encouraged by local Elders it appears the ultimate end is intrapersonal strength for individuals to cope with the challenges of everyday life. The confidence that will enable an individual to better cope with such challenges can be developed in a wilderness camp situation. Success in the construction of a birch bark basket, when helping to cook the evening feast, or learning to set a fishing net are local examples of some of the activities that can assist with the development of good feelings about oneself.

Culture, confidence, strength appear to be interrelated themes and are, to a large degree, inseparable. The bioregional elements of Rediscovery suggests experiences in local places and with local cultures will lead to youth feeling good about who they are and feeling good about the place where they can stand tall. The exposure to, and acceptance of, traditional activities such as sweats, fasts, songs, stories, and the bush living and moving skills of ancestors appears to be an important precursor to feeling personally strong. Tracy, George, Andy, Nadine and Charlie point to the acquisition of traditional skills and knowledge as a powerful medium for personal and cultural learning.

Being There (In the bush)

Local leaders and Elders suggest the camp situation presents great potential for youth to feel comfortable with themselves in the bush environment. As Andrus et al (1990) promote, there are opportunities for youth to become aware of their immediate surroundings and to celebrate and protect the important biodiversity of their immediate bioregion through 'local' wilderness experiences. Henley (1989) similarly points to the primary importance of the land for Rediscovery-style wilderness programs. Elders reflect the importance of youth to feel at home in the bush, rather than to be fearful of bears, bugs and bites. Encouraging youth develop wilderness living and moving skills will likely lead to an enhanced level of comfort for youth in the forest. Nadine is especially interested in youth understanding the uses of herbs for medicine, general health, and for food. Ideally she would love to see youth active with identifying and collecting herbs, and it is apparent she has many skills that can be imparted to youth in a camp situation.

Respect for the bush can only happen through exposure to it, suggests Charlie, George, Jeff, and the Cree speakers of Calling Lake (Nigel and Jack). Charlie is especially interested in youth understanding the animals in the bush and the important respect one who traps needs to have for the animals. Only through spending time getting to know animals, such as the beaver, will students be able to develop a respect for these creatures. Charlie is also adamant youth need to experience time alone in the bush to better respect their surroundings. He talks of quiet times sitting around just observing the bush and remaining still, as a means of better understanding the animals and bird life. George's lesson on respecting a tree through making a gift to the Creator before 'borrowing' birch-bark for crafting baskets was one activity that acknowledged the importance of respecting the bush. There are likely many lessons George and Charlie would be able to provide regarding the importance of respect for natural, local places.

I have mentioned earlier the importance of teaching survival skills as a program component encouraged universally by Elders. Similarly, the opportunities for the sharing of crafting skills is another approach for youth respecting the trees and shrubs in the bush. The women Elders are especially interested in youth developing skills and pride through the crafting of baskets, blankets, beadwork, and dreamcatchers. George suggests if a deer or a moose is shot during the camp there would be other things that could be constructed from the hide, meat for consumption, and excellent opportunities for sharing the skills of utilizing every part of the animals.

From the words of Francios and Smith at Wabasca-Desmarais, time in the forest will provide opportunity for the youth to reflect on current logging activity in the region. For these Elders, the protection of the remaining forest is imperative. Both Elders advocate environmentalism as an important camp component, for there are opportunities for youth to observe first hand the logging operations and to determine for themselves whether to embrace strategies for environmental protection.

Cultural Strengths

I have highlighted earlier the importance held by local Elders for native and non-native youth to experience local, traditional activities. Learning about respect for all things, the importance of protocols during these cultural activities, and the enjoyment one can gain from such activities have all been acknowledged by Elders as important. The Calling Lake community is well placed to be providing these activities, and there has been considerable activity in this regard over recent years. Such activity has the potential to enhance the confidence and skills of youth and to be making important connections to the activities of ancestors. Many of the youth from Calling Lake have already had experience with some of these cultural activities, and so the activities will likely mean different things for different youth.

Charlie talks of the potential strengths for youth that can be developed by knowing one's own culture. Rachel is convinced the increased use of the Cree language by youth, including when involved in a youth camp, will contribute to youth feeling better about themselves. Similarly, the program of sweats and fasts introduced to youth in Calling Lake over the summer is testimony to the importance placed upon these activities by local Elders. Non-native youth shall also be able to gain from the activities, particularly through better understanding the ceremonial practices of the native people involved.

Protocols

It is clear from the native education literature that protocols hold a central place in traditional native education. Local Elders have similarly highlighted the importance of doing things right and according to local protocol. I experienced a steep learning curve throughout this project in relation to the importance of protocols and I now recognize, at least superficially, the links between protocols, respect, and cultural authenticity. Of all the insights provided me during this project, the lessons from George on protocol stand out.

From my limited experience in the community, the importance of listening to the words of Elders' and to respecting their teachings is central to understanding the role and importance of protocols. There have been a number of times where I have not strictly followed the 'right way' shared to me, and the result has been not accessing information as well as I could have. Conversely, knowing the protocols has facilitated great opportunities for data collection whilst at the Wabasca Youth Conference. The learning of protocol through observation and repetition, as I have done, presents an important and unique insight into the apprenticeship role of the junior leaders or Elders in training. I am certain local Elders would strive to share with youth the importance of protocol in any youth camp situation.

Respect

Respect is a key word utilized by most Elders, and on many occasions. Such respect relates especially to the 'self', but also to others, to the environment, to the

Elders, to the Creator, to parents, to other youth, to animals, plants and birds, to the protocols, and to the traditional ways of the past. Respect is central to the educational program desired by local Elders, and has a key role to play in the education of youth. Respect draws links to the traditional past, whilst also preserving traditions for the future. Charlie provides many insights to the importance of respect in his talks, and suggests it is the immersion of youth into a wilderness setting that is the way to foster a respect for all things. Only through first hand exposure with animals, birds, plants, or other people is respect developed, according to Charlie. The local youth camp is a great opportunity to integrate respect between participants and all that surrounds them.

Stereotype Removal

Regular comments have been expressed regarding strategies for reducing the derogatory stereotypes held by non-native people and some native people towards Indians. There is an important role for the wilderness camp program to assist native and non-native youth recognize that they, as humans, are all equal. Andy has shared of the importance of operating by consensus, and this relates closely with George's insights to an efficient group operating with all participants acting 'as Presidents'. Opportunities for youth to work together and for incorporating traditional activities into the camp program have already been acknowledged as important strategies for reducing and removing stereotypes. Communal camp activities provide opportunities for better understanding, as well as opportunities for acknowledging and appreciating differences. George discusses a number of times the importance of youth from Calling Lake integrating with youth from Athabasca, so that when the Calling Lake senior youth travel to school in Athabasca they shall know people and be less likely to withdraw from the class. These are important socio-cultural outcomes for the camp process.

The Future

The camp experience is a view into the future for youth. There are opportunities during adventure activities for challenges requiring goal setting, planning, and leadership. These strategies and skills for success can be built upon during the camp experience and in a sequential manner, with spin-offs beyond the camp experience. Opportunities for reflection on experiences and to acknowledge the strengths and skills of the people will become a part of any camp experience, and have been acknowledged as important by the local people.

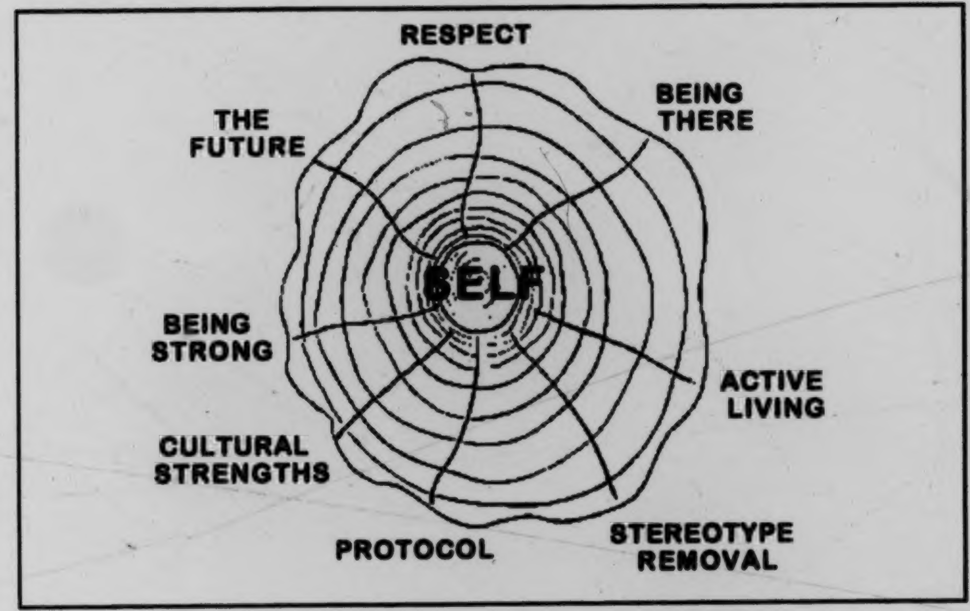
The importance placed by Elders upon ensuring visitors to the wilderness camp who represent local employment sectors suggests Elders are interested in getting youth to think ahead to the future and to plan a strategy for future success. Other indicators highlighted by Elders relative to the future include the importance of culture and tradition to support youth in periods of crisis, of the importance of removing stereotypes of Indian people, and of the importance for being healthy and living active lives.

6. Connecting Interrelated Themes

Spradley (1979) suggests that themes not only recur time and time again throughout different parts of a culture, but they also interconnect different aspects of that culture. I have utilized the metaphor of the tree again as a representation of the 'Self' in a local wilderness camp program, as depicted in Figure D. If one was to take a cross section of the trunk of the tree of 'self' any time during the camp experience, the 'self' would remain central to the major themes identified by Elders. That is, each of the themes identified would interact with other themes in a potentially holistic fashion and build upon the physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional self.

The self at the core of the tree is impacted at all times by the different thematic strands running through it, like faint cracks across a section of cut log. The growth rings in the log represent the fact that youth will always be at different levels of learning and ability, and that there will always be opportunities for learning more. Similarly, the growth rings interconnect the eight themes identified in a holistic, integrated manner.

FIGURE D: INTERRELATED THEMES - THE TREE TRUNK METAPHOR


RESPECT
BEING THERE
THE FUTURE
SELF
BEING STRONG
ACTIVE LIVING
CULTURAL STRENGTHS
PROTOCOL
STEREOTYPE REMOVAL

7. Towards A Camp Curriculum

My major contribution to the community was to be a camp curriculum that represented local wisdom and thought, and which acknowledged local information as important for youth to learn in a wilderness camp situation. From the themes established, as outlined in the previous section, my aim was to utilize my skills and experience in the outdoor education profession to identify key components of the camp program. The program would be returned to the project informants for comments, criticisms, and revisions before being presented to the camp organizing committee. Once all Elder informants were comfortable with those themes generated, and the identified curriculum components, I could assist the camp staff to integrate the components into a day to day program plan.

In reality the Elder informants did not have the opportunity to provide feedback to the curriculum components generated, for much of the final thematic work occurred after the camp had been abandoned for the 1995 summer. Further reflection is provided on this implication for camp program planning in the concluding chapter. Regardless, the following is a curriculum statement developed from discussions and interviews with the Elders of the greater Athabasca area for the youth of the area. Whilst the statement outlines the potential components of a locally based wilderness education program it is important to acknowledge the statement has yet to be endorsed by those Elders and community leaders who contributed to its development.

TOWARDS A CURRICULUM OF REDISCOVERY

Kammistekosik: A local, wilderness education curriculum statement for the community of Athabasca / Calling Lake.

The guiding camp philosophy shall involve experiences as a central component of the camp program. Activities are designed to foster the growth of 'self' through a program of cross-cultural values education, environmental awareness activities and adventure pursuits. Fun shall be an important camp element, with native and non-native youth learning and growing in a relaxed, enjoyable and supportive camp environment. The program shall draw strength from the traditions and knowledge of local people and take place in a local wilderness environment.

Cultural Education Components.

- Cultural authenticity shall be retained through the employment of local Cree teachings, local leaders, and activities specific to local 'place'.
- Gratitude and respect shall be encouraged for the Creator, for all life forms, for Elders, for parents, others, and especially for ones self.
- Emphasis shall be placed upon learning local protocols and their relationship to respecting all things.
- Reducing and removing the stereotypes of native people shall be encouraged through the interaction of native and non-native youth and leaders in the program.

- Youth shall be provided an exposure to local cultural ceremonies such as sweats, fasts, feasts, and prayer, to native spirituality, and to the Cree language as a means of enhancing cross-cultural awareness, respect and dignity for ones self through cultural awareness.
- Through these cultural education opportunities native and non-native youth shall better understand that all humans are created equal.

Adventure Education Components

- The learning of survival skills in the bush environment shall be emphasized, including feeling at home in the forest, navigation without map or compass, fishing, food procurement and preparation, swimming, rowing a boat, paddling a canoe.
- Cooperating and sharing whilst living together and surviving shall provide insights to traditional ways of living, as ones ancestors may have done.
- Developing a respect for oneself as a human spiritual being shall be encouraged through achieving success at an individual and community level.
- Better understanding of others and an enhanced level of trust between participants shall be encouraged through participation in a sequential program of adventure experiences that foster confidence and a supportive environment.
- Opportunities shall be provided for developing a sense of belonging in the bush environment through experiences in a local wilderness setting.

Environmental Education components

- Experiences in wilderness shall support youth feel at home in the bush, and shall assist them develop a spiritual connection to wilderness and nature.
- Natural places shall be utilized with respect, so that future generations will be able to live there also.
- Youth shall be encouraged to not waste the Creators natural gifts but rather to develop a feeling of kinship with all creatures of the bush, sky and water.

- Youth shall be encouraged to protect their surroundings in the event of local wilderness areas being compromised in some fashion.

CHAPTER 5: REFLECTIONS ON A JOURNEY OF REDISCOVERY

There is a peacefulness to this place. Sitting on the lake edge in the late afternoon sun is a pleasure - the first hues of the fall reflect dull yellow on the shimmering waters and a vee formation of geese has flown overhead earlier, encouraging each other southward with their unique honks. I am perched against a bank, scrunching my toes into sand that only weeks ago was well submerged. My peacefulness is accentuated by the knowledge the camp project is over, and I can reflect only on what could have been. I try and create an image of my surroundings - there are the sounds of drums, songs, and proud voices, images of youth paddling canoes and fishing, smells of smoked fish, and visions of materials from the forest being crafted into works of art under the guidance of the old people. The images are real, in my mind at least, for I have been dreaming them for what seems a long time now. I wonder if they will ever become reality again.

(Personal Journal excerpt, Orloff Lake, September 1995)

Reflection is my way of making sense of the chaos, of processing life experiences, understanding what those experiences mean, then putting them into perspective relative to my future endeavors. Reflection transforms my life experiences into learning opportunities.

In his classic text Experience and Education John Dewey highlighted what he termed the "organic connection" between experience and education, a concept that has informed my own teaching practice for a number of years. Dewey firmly believed experiences were not automatically educational and that an experience needed to involve an element of continuity, whereby the experience contributed positively to some future growth or learning. It is the reflection following an experience that assists transform that experience into some future and ongoing learning.

Gass et al (1995) suggest that the end result of a true learning experience is personal and will form the basis of future experiences and learning opportunities. Other theorists and practitioners have produced experiential learning models, which can be generalized into ongoing cyclical model involving an "Experience", some form of "Reflection" on that experience, a "Processing" phase to acknowledge some key aspect of the experience, and an "Application" phase to transfer learning to some future "Experience". This chapter represents the processing and application phases of the cycle through highlighting the experiences I have been fortunate to have endured throughout the Kammistekosik camp project, as well as the time spent processing those experiences subsequently.

One of the special characteristics of experiential learning programs is the equal weighting placed upon both the product and process of education, stressing both 'how' an answer is arrived at as well as 'what' the answer is (Joplin, 1985). My aim with this chapter is to acknowledge the learning that has personally resulted from the research process rather than focusing solely upon the final community research and extension outcomes.

The Research Problem

The central aim of this project lay with exploring the perspective of local community Elders regarding what should be taught in a wilderness camp situation. Interviews were conducted to access specific local ethnographic information that would then be utilized in the establishment of a local wilderness camp curriculum. This information would include the life skills, values, experiences and knowledge Elders felt were important to assist youth cope with during the demands of everyday life. The previous chapter outlines the results of the Elder interviews, as well as my community experiences and observations.

As the journey of collecting data occurred I became aware of the lack of depth of insight generated. This I believe was due to the research methodology utilized, which shall be discussed in detail later, and my own romanticism towards native peoples. With regards to the latter point, I was expecting to reveal a greater depth of traditional knowledge from the interviews. This I was expecting in the form of traditional living skills and knowledge, survival and hunting skills, songs, stories, dances, and other locally-specific ecological knowledge. I sought early on any connections Elders could present between local places and the local oral traditions, but without great success. I was also expecting far more detail to emerge both in terms of camp program material, in the form of values, skills, experiences, and knowledge, as well as the style of teaching to be utilized during the wilderness program.

From the wealth of North American native earth wisdom I had read prior and during the camp project I was similarly looking to find more reference to the camp program being linked in some spiritually-significant way with the local surroundings. Whether these aspects would indeed have emerged during the camp experience should it have occurred is difficult to determine. Regardless, my own pre-project perceptions of native people and their traditions significantly influenced the design of my primary research question.

I now recognize the importance of obtaining ethnographic information from a wider range of community leaders and Elders than those initially sought. Regardless, there is a wisdom of the Elders that has emerged from the messages and lessons provided me during this project. I have clearly seen the Elders 'walking and talking' (Akan, 1990) and applying the principles they view as important for youth to their own lives. There is a responsibility felt by local Elders to educate youth, which I too felt as a learner on occasion. The insights provided by Lightning (1992) on the skills of Elders relative to storytelling and education also became evident during the project. George, in particular, took the time to 'unfold' a number of lessons to me and he was particularly adept at assessing my needs as a learner and researcher. I was told and retold stories highlighting the importance of respect and doing things the right way which later assisted my endeavors significantly when meeting with the Elders in Wabasca-Desmarais.

The insights George, Tracy and Nadine provided regarding the importance of youth having a positive experience at the camp suggested they were very insightful at assessing the needs of youth. This project has proven local Elders do have a vitally important role to play in community-based education programs. Communities the world over intent on developing their own local wilderness camp initiatives would be wise to include the input of their seniors.

Rediscovery Wilderness Camps

At one time I felt the experience of assisting a community establish a wilderness camp would provide opportunities for better understanding the nature and function of Rediscovery camps. However, this project has not investigated 'Rediscovery' or an existing Rediscovery Wilderness camp and I am little better informed about Rediscovery than I was prior to immediately commencing the work. This thesis project has highlighted the challenges apparent in establishing a Rediscovery-style program and the commitment and input necessary to make any significant community project happen. For those communities with Rediscovery Wilderness camps and other youth initiatives operating, I hold nothing but respect and admiration for their commitment and I congratulate them on their achievements.

Opportunities abound for conducting scholarly research into any aspect of the Rediscovery camp movement. I would like to encourage communities to undertake their own research whilst establishing a local wilderness camp or, for those communities operating wilderness education programs, to examine elements of their current programs. There will be benefits for other communities through the sharing of these Rediscovery stories, especially the sharing of challenges encountered and the strategies that local people employed to overcome them. As outlined later, the participatory methodology employed during this project was particularly well suited for the local community and could potentially be employed in other evolving community camps. There are also suggestions for alternative methods to be employed under the critical orientation I have followed, and which could both enhance the level of local participation and the community exposure of the camp initiative.

It is my intention to forward a copy of this work to the Rediscovery International Foundation, for there are lessons communities can take from this study to assist them establish a Rediscovery-style camp program of their own. There will be steep learning curves for all communities striving to establish wilderness programs and I would like the Foundation to consider sharing more of the struggles communities endure during the development process. Having tangible evidence of the experience of others would have greatly assisted the Athabasca / Calling Lake camp organizing group see their struggles in the context of other evolving camps. Undertaking any developmental project is a risky business and there have been regular moments of organizational doubt during this project which, I suggest, may have been diminished through hearing of other Rediscovery struggles. A number of further recommendations are made for Rediscovery International in a latter section.

Community Based Participatory Research?

From the experiences of others previously involved with research in northern Canadian communities and in 'developing' countries internationally, it was obvious a participatory style of research would improve the chances of local community acceptance for this project, as well as providing opportunities for community self determination. I was highly motivated for the camp initiative to be of value to the community, and to enthuse local community Elders through my work to become involved in the local Rediscovery camp initiative. Community participation was a theme prevalent in much of the literature surrounding community research and development, and the participatory success of these research stories did much to enthuse me to such a critical orientation. I took special encouragement from the words of Chambers (1992, 1991) when applying community-based, participatory research methods to this project.

The participatory style appeared to 'fit' both the research challenge and the community, and I was willing to accept being self reflexive and critical and to 'learn-on-the-run' from the mistakes Cornwall et al (1994) suggested I would inevitably experience. With the twenty - twenty vision hindsight provides, I can now say this project has not been totally participatory in orientation. My intentions of keeping the community abreast of developments, involving them in all stages of the research process, and "handing over the stick" to the local people (Chambers, 1994) have not occurred to a level that would deem this project truly participatory. Whilst the initial idea for establishing a wilderness camp for youth originated within the community, the research conducted was essentially driven by me as an outsider. Local people have not been significantly empowered to the research process, or indeed trained adequately to lead any component of the data gathering, analysis, or writing process. My final conclusions have also yet to be returned to the community, so some would suggest I have taken more from the community than I have given back. In my heart however, I know this not to be true.

Reason (1994) points to validity under the critical paradigm as being more than just the trustworthiness and credibility of the research process. The degree of catalytic validity (Sparkes, 1992) measures how effective a critical project has been in terms of raising the consciousness of the local peoples to their own situation so they can in turn improve their own lives, termed conscientization by Friere (1972). There is some evidence to suggest this project has lead to the empowerment of local people, but it is a complex process in the short term to access the degree of catalytic validity. I find it difficult to conclude this research project has done much to contribute any lasting improvement to the quality of life of the local people, however only a longer term monitoring project would be able to effective gauge this. I am convinced, however, that efforts to increase the degree of participation of local people in a similar future project would reap exponential improvements in the people's quality of life.

Notwithstanding these points, I hold and have demonstrated enormous respect and regard for the local people whom I have interacted with during this project. I was able to develop an excellent rapport with the Elders interviewed and others in the community and I have established friendships with the local people. I have not pushed local people into situations in which they were outwardly uncomfortable, and I have not attempted to hurry the data gathering process. This has not been a quick and dirty research process, but reflects what Chambers (1992) would regard as relaxed, rural appraisal (R.R.A.).

Reason (1994) highlights the skills of the researcher necessary for success in a rural community situation. I am pleased my people skills, my facilitative abilities in individual and group situations, and my skills with listening have paid dividends in terms of community acceptance and the research process. I am delighted George has felt comfortable with being interviewed to the point where he now considers himself a researcher and has gained paid, casual employment with the Arctic Institute. This is one unexpected outcome of the camp development process and I feel good about providing George an introduction to participatory indigenous knowledge data collection.

It is my belief that a greater time commitment to this project could have built upon my acceptance into the community and my established rapport with Elders and community leaders. As the research program drew to a close at the end of the 1995 summer, I was only just building a platform that would have better realized more of the critical objectives of my research plans. Chambers (1992) prescribes the longer term ethnographic immersion strategies typical of many anthropological studies as no longer necessary, provided a rapid, relaxed, participatory program is followed. For an experienced participatory community researcher this may be so, however in my experience a considerably longer period of immersion is essential to achieving any truly critical ends.

Critical Objectives

The research literature has provided me little specific guidance on the practical nature of community participation, especially in the critical areas of balancing power issues within a community or improving the economic conditions of disempowered local people. I now know these desired outcomes of the critical research process require considerable periods of time to evolve. Whilst not intending to challenge major community socio-political power structures with this project, I was interested in empowering local people to take control of the Rediscovery camp initiative and for them to feel proud about it. Similarly, enhancing the self confidence and cultural integrity of the local people (Thrupp and Haynes, 1994) were other critical ideals. Whilst it would be arrogant of me to assume this project has had a significant and lasting influence on the cultural or personal well-being of the local people, there have been a number of short term outcomes that suggest a degree of personal and community empowerment may have occurred. These shall be addressed directly in a later section.

The Risks of Failure

Chambers (1991) writes of the risks involved in any critically-oriented, participatory community project and highlights the lack of literature surrounding unsuccessful projects and the impact on the community. This project has not achieved the community's desired outcome of an established wilderness camp, although the process was halted by the vagaries of weather for which local people had no control. Regardless, there is some evidence to suggest this lack of success has taken a toll on community members. Tracy initially viewed the failure of establishing the Camp in 1995 as yet another opportunity gone begging for youth. I am uncertain if Tracy would be willing to contribute the same level of enthusiasm to another community initiative for youth, especially after she has experienced a degree of perceived failure with this project. This may be accentuated by the undercurrents of conflict amongst members of the camp organizing group. I am uncertain if the same group of community members would voluntarily chose to work together again, even if their objective was another youth initiative. Regardless, the Director of the local Native Friendship Center sees the wilderness camp concept being followed through to fruition in the years ahead. He perceives the need for ongoing community development for the camp project, as well as for his own organization. I am certain the community has the skills, knowledge and experience to facilitate such a development, and that local people would continue to support such an initiative.

Methodological Constraints

Some of the methods employed for data gathering and analysis have not assisted the meeting of emancipatory ideals. As outlined earlier I chose to use interactive, informal interviews to record the perspective of local Elders. I sought rambling responses in a conversational manner that would elicit descriptive phrases and key concepts to be explored in more detail later. This approach was well received by all Elders involved and in no way alienated them from the process. All but one informant appeared to become more interested in the camp project as we conversed.

The many casual conversations were great for developing a relaxed rapport, but did not provide the richness of data I was expecting. A shortage of verbatim passages obtained also limited my ability to analyze Elder perspectives in an in-depth fashion, as well as preventing a richness of data to permeate my writing. I was able to draw themes from our meetings, but not take away passages of recorded script beyond my own notes for ongoing processing. Fortunately the keeping of my own personal journal has assisted with this conceptualization.

Spradley (1979) suggests skilled ethnographers obtain much of their data through observation and many casual conversations. Whilst I can certainly endorse the importance of relaxed conversation for rapport building there also needs to be occasions when the data collection process is more structured. In similar future situations I would endeavor to commence the recording of conversations earlier as a means of obtaining tangible and rich descriptors for the purposes of thematic analysis and the writing process.

My own concerns over what constituted a Elder in the local community sense were tested during this project. There was difficulty locating Elder informants, due in part to the diversity of the 'community' under investigation. I chose to adopt informants as they presented themselves as interested in the camp program and the result was a sample likely difficult to replicate in similar future studies. Elders interviewed were predominantly of native origin, yet the wider community make-up was distinctly Euro-Canadian. In part my interest in empowering local native groups was behind this. Rediscovery camps are typically initiated by indigenous, First Nation groups and I was interested in a local native camp operating with the blessing and guidance of native Elders. In the future it may be wise to look at employing more of a representative group of informants, so that the themes and curriculum generated become more representative of the wider community.

There is potential for enhancing the degree of understanding between cultural groups through facilitating community leaders to work together in developing their own unique curriculum. Yet there is also the real risk of highlighting the high degree of cultural assimilation in the community and missing the data I was especially seeking to expose. A more representative sample of community leaders may actually have inhibited the development of themes particularly relevant to local Cree culture.

A major research design flaw was not integrating local youth into the process of developing the curriculum. The camp program was to be for the youth, yet I chose not to consult them. My attempts to acknowledge the community Elders as holding all important local community knowledge meant I devalued the experiences and knowledge of local youth. Experiential educators acknowledge students can draw valid and meaningful conclusions from their experiences (Chapman et al, 1992; Gass et al, 1995). A similar future project for youth must involve their input, for without it there will always be implications in terms of curriculum content and program sequencing.

The final analysis of Elder themes occurred after the camp season, effectively minimizing the impact of any analysis or conclusions upon the camp itself. Only key themes were presented to Elders and the organizing group. This fact may have created some confusion for the camp organizing group. Clear, open lines of communication were established for much of this project, however more discussion immediately prior to the planned camp regarding the camp curriculum may have had the local people feeling more comfortable about the whole camp process.

Delaying the final stages of analysis was, however, a valuable experience and the additional opportunities for reflection were insightful. Time needs to be allocated during any critical, emancipatory project for the researcher and project participants to dwell upon their findings, and to determine the validity of their endeavors for changing the socio-political conditions of local people. As the Association for Experiential Education (1997) reflect in their adopted definition, experiential learning occurs only when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis. Learning from this project has been accentuated by the additional time provided beyond that spent working with community members. It is likely local Elders interviewed have also taken the opportunity to dwell upon the notion of developing a camp curriculum and may now have a more concrete perspective on what should be presented to youth in a wilderness camp program.

Project Outcomes

Undertaking this research project has been a risky venture, for I have thrown myself into a foreign community and attempted a project for which I had little prior experience. The situation required me to take initiative, make decisions regularly, and to be accountable for the results. Throughout I held the dream of seeing the wilderness camp program evolve into an event the local native community would feel extremely proud of and become committed to making happen again in the future and in a better way. During the process there were times of major uncertainty, of frustration, of success, of failure, and of opportunities to transform the dream close to reality. There too were tremendous risks for me personally, in terms of my academic objectives, as well as for the local community in not achieving their plans. With risk does come reward however, and whilst the camp project has yet to be realized I am delighted with some of the community outcomes from the project.

Relaxed, Rural Appraisal

The most important community outcome has stemmed from the fact I did not rush in to 'help' the community, did not seek to control local people, or to undertake to complete every developmental task myself. Whilst it was often tremendously difficult to sit back and observe the local people slowly work on the project, the result is they may now be better equipped to achieve results in some future project. This relaxed approach has, to a degree, empowered local people and is perhaps best characterized by Lisa who gained tremendous personal strength through seeking funds from local businesses for the project. She was incredibly proud of the bank balance at the conclusion of the project and will take this pride to some future endeavor I am certain. The relaxed approach to the rural appraisal and extension challenge has proved beneficial in a number of other ways…

- My informal style of conversational interview was not apparently threatening to local people. The data collected has been what I would judge as honest and personal. Data collected has contributed to the development of a camp curriculum which demonstrates clear connections between themes and between the messages of each Elder.
- Elders have been impressed with the importance placed upon acknowledging traditional and local knowledge. Some have recognized that they hold skills, knowledge, and experiences from which youth would be capable of learning. These outcomes are related directly to the style of research utilized.
- Elders appear to have enjoyed being involved in the research process. The willingness of George to become further involved in participatory research, for example, reflects this.
- My attempts at keeping conversations and interviews informal were enjoyable and friendships have been established. I have greatly enjoyed relating with the local people. The rapport and personal relationships established with community members has likely done much to assist future research projects gain acceptance in the local community.
- My own bias as an experienced outdoor educator has not seriously impacted upon the curriculum developed. Whilst this has yet to be tested in a camp situation the curriculum includes those activities the Elders have highlighted. It is important, however, to acknowledge the framework utilized has eventuated from my experiences.

Other Community Development Outcomes

As well as the outcomes from the relaxed approach taken with data collection and community, there were small indicators suggesting this project had indeed led to a degree of community empowerment. There are many aspects of the camp development process the organizing camp group had done well, although these are difficult to acknowledge when those directly involved had their hearts set on seeing youth and Elders interacting in a wilderness situation. The following are insights that suggest there were moments of community development during the process...

The camp development itself: Whilst many aspects of the camp were arranged for at the last minute, the weather effectively put paid to a well organized initiative. The organizing group could feel proud about providing for most aspects of the summer program, including:

- The camp was affiliated to the Rediscovery International Foundation.
- Systems for administration, staff training, and emergencies were arranged.
- More than five thousand dollars had been raised to cover the basic program costs.
- Program equipment had been planned for, borrowed and / or purchased.
- Staff had been organized and donations for their time arranged for.
- Most of the camp food had been donated or purchased.
- Transport for the youth, Elders and staff had been arranged.
- Invitations for community guests to visit the camp had been arranged and were waiting to be sent.
- Specific youth were organized to attend.
- Pre-camp information packages had been developed for participants.
- Liability waivers had been arranged and emergency procedures investigated.
- A tentative program had been arranged.
- The venue had been visited and plans made for the physical camp layout.
- Some camp crafting materials (Birch bark and Spruce root) had been collected.
- Local media had been kept abreast of developments and articles printed in the local paper.

The contributions of personnel: Local people had made substantial personal contributions to the project, highlighting a spread of support for the Camp by the local community. These contributions included:

- The organizing committee spending considerable time meeting on regular occasion, traveling often in private vehicles between Calling Lake and Athabasca.
- Local leaders and Elders demonstrated a willingness to contribute to the project, both through the interview / discussion process and independently with the committee.
- The Cree Speakers from Calling Lake spending time behind the scenes arranging for traditional activities to be presented at the camp.
- Leaders of local businesses went out of their way to ensure funds were available for the camp, despite the excessively short time frame provided.
- A parent from Calling Lake acted as a mediator with local youth to ensure they were prepared for the camp.
- Local resource people, including the RCMP and Fish and Wildlife staff, spent time with the organizing group assessing ways they can support the project.
- Local people in Calling Lake were organized to cover the day to day responsibilities of camp staff to be involved in the program.

The activation of the community: The camp project sparked some community enthusiasm and a lot of local support. This activation included:

- Individuals and businesses making a considerable donation of money to the project.
- Local people offering the use of their farm quads and trailers.
- Forestry groups donating the use of all necessary camping equipment, including tents, cooking equipment, first aid supplies and tools.
- The local paper providing free advertising, providing coverage of camp developments, and opportunities to run camp stories.
- Local organizations, including AL-PAC, RCMP, and Fish and Wildlife, freeing staff for a day or more to work with the youth in the camp environment.

- Individuals in the community storing camp food in refrigerators and freezers prior to the camp.
- Local people freely offering their time and support to the project on regular occasion.
- A schools offering the use of their canoes and safety equipment for use during the program.
- Local fishermen offering to enhance the program safety during canoe expeditions by providing powerboat backup.
- Women from both Calling Lake and Athabasca were planning to coordinate the cooking of meals at the camp.

What the project has not done for community

This project effectively empowered local people to establish their own wilderness camp, although they were thwarted at achieving their goal by the weather. It is difficult to determine if this degree of empowerment shall have any lasting impact upon the local people. One could surmise the degree of catalytic validity is low for this study, due primarily to the limited community confirmation of the curriculum during through the research process. Elders have not had opportunity to question or challenge my interpretations, or to correct obvious misinformation as it may be documented. Until this validation is completed I have fallen into one of the common 'outsider' traps outlined by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1987).

Handing over the stick (Chambers, 1994) involves local participation in every aspect of the research process and there exists opportunity for a diverse range of social validation techniques with such a project. There has been insufficient social validation of objective data by local people and this may have inhibited the use of the 'peoples science' where locals tell their own story. Reason (1994) examples storytelling, song, skits, and sociodrama as validation techniques that could contribute a diversity of data These forms of validation did not expose themselves to a great degree during the data collection and conceptualization process. The limited input of local people to the data gathering and thematic process may have inhibited the involvement of the local people to the development process.

To determine the degree of achievement of this projects critical ends requires an ongoing monitoring program. It is my belief, again, that an introductory level project, with the researcher active in the field for a duration of perhaps less than four months, will often struggle to adequately determine the degree of community growth and change. I am uncertain of the real benefits to the community from this project, however there are signs of a critical mass developing regarding the establishment of a community based wilderness camp in the near future.

Future Outcomes

Evidence suggests the strengths, knowledge, experience, and commitment of local people will see a camp project eventuate. The financial support provided by the local business community, the vision of local Elders to have a wilderness-style camp program for their youth and their families, and the physical and cultural assets of the community all lend towards a successful camp initiative. The Athabasca Native Friendship Center is well poised for developing youth initiatives in and near the Town of Athabasca. In Calling Lake the cultural activities being shared currently with youth and adults and the camp / bush experiences of local Elders all provide a solid platform for a local cultural, wilderness program. I perceive the initiatives occurring separately from each other in the future. Whilst I may have sown seeds for change during this project the strengths and skills of local people have not been significantly enhanced through the participatory research process. There will still be a great deal of learning on the run for a similar project the second time around.

Participatory Project Alternatives

As with all endeavors there is always room for future growth, and this project is no exception. For a project proposed for the benefit of youth there was insufficient youthful input. Training local youth to conduct in-depth interviews with their Elders and monitoring the progress of youth would have resulted in additional community outcomes that include the following...

- More local people becoming involved, therefore generating an enhanced level of interest in the project.

- Researcher skills being developed and retained in the community.
- Input from youth regarding what they felt should be included in a wilderness education camp.
- Local people involved in all stages of the research process, as producers and owners of their own information.
- Youth and Elders recognizing they can be in charge of their own destiny, and that they do have important local, cultural information to share.
- A validation of local knowledge through a more diverse range of social validation techniques.

"Foxfire" is an experiential education approach that could have been well utilized in motivating youth to interview Elders themselves. Developed more than twenty five years ago by Georgian educator Eliot Willington, Foxfire steps away from traditional approaches to schooling. The first Foxfire lesson in 1966 involved Willington sending his students into the community and interviewing the local people about Appalachian mountain crafts and living skills (Knapp, 1992b). He then had the students compile a quarterly magazine which later became republished as a series of books. Subsequently, creative teachers have utilized Willington's method to integrate local resources into school curriculum. With some modification of the Foxfire approach, which itself is particularly flexible and empowering, it could be applied to a research situation where the community is discovering and recording its own traditional knowledge base. Such a project would in itself be participatory research and would contribute in a significant way to the empowerment of the community.

A Personal Rediscovery

A Rediscovery promotional Tee-shirt has been produced with the slogan, "I once heard a voice in Nature and found that it was my own". The slogan was derived from the comments of a young participant on a Rediscovery program, and hints at the opportunities presented for participants in the camp experience to make important personal connections with nature. In many respects the slogan represents the personal learning I can acknowledge from this work.

This project has in itself been fueled by my romanticism for native cultures. North American Indians have long held a fascination for me, and when I now reflect on those childhood games of cowboys and Indians I recall always being happy being the Indian. The bows and arrows, feathers, tomahawks and war cries were always far more attractive to me as a youth than the six shooter or rifle, and I had great delight in turning the stories around and allowing the Indians to win for a change.

Today I recognize the massive impact the media has played in developing the warrior stereotype on North American native people. Regardless, there remains for me a special fascination with indigenous people and their connections with land. That fascination Horwood (1994) identifies as my profound need as a non-native to connect more authentically with land.

This project has provided me opportunities for connecting with land and the local people. I have immersed myself into a number of traditional ceremonies and wilderness survival skills and strategies of the Cree people of northern Alberta. Sheridan (1994) suggests such interest in traditional native technologies and eco-spirituality has been the catalyst for the development of the Boy Scout movement and the general appropriation of traditional ecological knowledge into environmental education. I do not dispute this fact and also believe there is a positive spin-off from such appropriation, albeit for non-native people.

Immersion into Cree and Metis-Cree culture has assisted me better understand the role and importance of traditional ceremonies in any culture, and the important differences between the various indigenous people the world over. Most importantly it has diminished significantly the stereotyped romanticism I have long held for native people and their relationship with their natural surroundings. Indians are not all nature lovers that is certain. First Nation people of North America, like other native and non-native people the world over, have a diversity of attitudes towards their natural home. Regardless, I still believe there is much we can learn from the aboriginal people of the world. The experience of these people living with the earth for hundreds of years cannot be ignored and such experience suggests there is wealth of information yet to be acknowledged as science.

Upon my return journey to New Zealand I have noticed in myself less of a romantic tendency towards my Maori and Pacific Island neighbors, but with an enhanced interest in the traditional living and moving skills of these people and their crafts. From my work in Canada I now recognize the wonderful diversity between aboriginal groups, as well as between individuals. I recognize too that Maori people should not be grouped as Maori, for the term is itself a generalized term that does not acknowledge the diverse range of hapu and iwi in Aoteoroa / New Zealand. Similarly I have tried to ensure Fijians, Samoans, and Tokelauans are no longer grouped as Pacific Islanders. Like many New Zealanders I note the influx of Asian people into our communities and I find myself welcoming these people and becoming more interested in learning about their cultural uniqueness, when historically I may have chosen to ignore that Asia is an extremely large place with tremendous cultural diversity.

On a personal level I am happy now to be regarded as a Pakeha, as someone unique to New Zealand and not just another of European descent. I am presently on a personal rediscovery of my own, as I seek to better understand my own ancestry.

As the result of interacting with, and better understanding the perspective of Elders in a community, I am able to better appreciate and acknowledge those Elders in my own family. Likely this situation is a symptom of myself aging, and therefore unconsciously growing wiser with experience and desiring more kudos. The Albertan community experiences have assisted me respect age and life stories, life knowledge, and wrinkles, and the Elderly I am now better able to view as people with a wealth of knowledge rather than folks who have become a burden upon western society. My western world would do well to adopt some of the values aboriginal people hold towards their Elderly.

In a similar vein, I have found the virtues of gifting away things of value to me. I am less materialistic after spending time with generous, open hearted folk in the north. As my time to leave Canada approached I had no hesitation in gifting away possessions that I treasured, including the Dene drum gifted to me by the Cree speakers of Calling Lake that was admired by one of my colleagues. The western world badly needs to diminish our materialistic traits and I feel there is much we can learn from traditional aboriginal virtues in regard to living without the burden of an excessive level of assets.

Significance of the Journey

Whilst this research journey has been personally significant there are also things the academic community can take away from it. Throughout I had endeavored to place importance upon the knowledge and reality of local people as important, to acknowledge locally derived knowledge as intellectual property and as important ethnographic information. Academics must accept that the generation of knowledge is never value free, and that knowledge, power, and control are tightly interwoven.

As a fledgling researcher I have acknowledged this issue of power and attempted to ensure the power of knowledge generation has remained in local hands. This has not always been the case in reality, but I do believe a critical, relaxed people-oriented methodology was the best strategy for this situation. The ethical challenges presented to me as the result of issues arising from previous research in northern Native communities have been addressed, and the selection of a critical, participatory agenda has to a large extent avoided these ethical issues from occurring. I am pleased the epistemological direction and methodological approach chosen has matched the research situation. Local people appear to have responded well to the experiential nature of participatory research, although there is certainly room for future improvement.

From a research and development perspective I now recognize the importance of understanding local protocols and respecting them throughout ones research endeavors. The data from my latter interviews, for example, was far more beneficial than my earlier Elder discussions, for I was able to ask the Elders for specific information and in the correct manner. It is essential for community researchers to obtain as much background knowledge on the community to be investigated and to ensure local cultures are respected through doing things in a manner acceptable to local people.

Implications for Community Development and Research Personnel

Few reports document the trials and frustration of participatory researchers in the field and there appears a distinct lack of 'honest' advice from leaders in the participatory research arena, especially with regards to gaining full community participation. Chambers (1992) and Cornwall et al (1994) are exceptions who inform new entrants to the participatory research field that there are many problems, traps, and issues to be faced. However the scope of these challenges is certainly not explicit for the newcomer to participatory research methodologies.

Whilst I am not in a position to endorse the comments of Reason (1994) and Thrupp and Haynes (1994), in voicing concern over exaggerated research reports from participatory projects, I now hold some skepticism towards many of the community outcomes purported through participatory research projects. Participatory researchers need to document the trials of conducting their style of research in a manner where fellow researchers are able to learn from their endeavors. I have absolutely no doubt that a well organized community based participatory project can be empowering for any community. However it will only be through a one hundred percent commitment by those researchers 'in the know' and through honest reporting that the potential of community empowerment through community based participation in research can be actualized. I therefore trust others may be able to take some lessons from the 'semi-participatory' experiences I have documented.

It is interesting to note the lack of clear guidelines for assessing the catalytic validity of participatory rural research projects worldwide. I believe a content analysis of published participatory research in rural communities may highlight a clear need for post project monitoring and could lead to better determining the effectiveness of the many studies deemed participatory.

Community participation and other empowerment strategies are time intensive. Such critical research requires an authentic commitment (Fals Borda and Rahman, 1991) beyond the time I was able to dedicate to this project. I was committed to the camp project and willing to immerse myself into the community for an extended period, and in what I believed was an authentic fashion. However, if I was to truly do justice to a community based participatory research approach I needed to involve myself in the research environment to an endpoint the community deemed appropriate. Ultimately my needs as a researcher came before my needs as a community development or extension agent, which is not what the literature suggests is truly participatory. As participatory research projects become more widespread in the Canadian north it will be essential for the university community to better appreciate the commitment necessary by graduate students to the challenges of participatory work in predominantly native communities.

I have discussed earlier the importance of participatory researchers presenting their findings in a manner that provides a trail for others to follow and learn from. Participatory research does appear to be gaining popularity as an effective community empowerment strategy, but it is also viewed as politically correct and fashionable. Community research and extension practitioners need to address this issue and be certain their work is indeed critically oriented and not just another rhetorical, participatory project.

Parashak et al (1994) have documented their difficulty in conducting research programs that would satisfy both the academic community and the community under investigation. The potentially differing standards of relevance between academia and community make it difficult for the newcomer to community-participatory research to achieve the wider goals of community empowerment. In this study I regularly had the dilemma of balancing my roles as researcher and community extension agent, and this has meant not always achieving the desired objectives when wearing either my research or development hats. From my experience I recognize the importance of doing justice to both roles, which requires the participatory researcher to replicate any theoretical and experiential knowledge for both the academic community and the community under investigation. This thesis I have endeavored to write in a format that will hopefully not exclude newcomers to academia from conducting research in rural communities. Yet the format is unlikely to be useful for the community to further develop their camp project, and there is a need to reproduce the key elements of this report into a format that will better meet the needs of the local people. Likely a written report may only have limited usefulness to the camp organizing committee, and time may need to be spent on alternative forms of data dissemination to better meet the practical, cultural and political needs of the community. Therefore, the undertaking of community based participatory research will likely require an enhanced commitment of time, creativity, and community interaction than other research approaches. Fals Borda and Rahman (1991) suggest participatory research requires both an authentic commitment and authentic participation with local people. I can certainly endorse this viewpoint from my own experiences.

Chambers has lots of encouragement for the fledgling participatory researcher. My experiences can only reflect his words, and one needs to experience participating in community research to learn and grow professionally and personally...

> "So START. Do not wait. Get on with it. Relax. try things. Learn by doing. Fail forwards. Experiment. Ask - what went well? What went badly? What can we learn? How can we do better?... done well it (participatory research) becomes self-improving and self-spreading: self improving through critical awareness, embracing error, and learning what works; and self-spreading through sharing."
>
> (Chambers, 1992: 90)

Recommendations for the Community

The greater community of Athabasca has the leadership skills, knowledge, personnel, and community support to develop their own Rediscovery-style camp project. It is hoped this project has assisted the community acknowledge their own strengths, and I am optimistic the community shall develop a camp program when the time is right. This will require a commitment by a number of community people. My sole suggestion to the community is to get in and do it when the time feels right.

The concept of Elders and youth working together I feel suits the community well, and there is support from within the community for developing a permanent style family wilderness camp facility. Any 'development' project needs to be initiated and coordinated by the community, and the strengths of community already exist to facilitate this.

There is also scope for outdoor education expertise from outside the community, provided such expertise acknowledges the importance of local program activities and leadership. Having native and non-native people working together with the development of any community initiative may contribute to an enhanced level of understanding and respect for all involved. The Rediscovery International Foundation is well positioned to support any wilderness camp initiative and the community would do well supporting Elders and enthusiastic local people able to assist with a local initiative to the next Rediscovery International Conference. These people would gain tremendously from the experiences of other communities who have programs established and meeting their goals. The Rediscovery network could assist with the coordination of an initial camp program, especially in the area of staff training and safety systems development. Each Spring the Foundation coordinates a training program for youth leaders and adults that would build upon the level of expertise currently existing in the community.

Like the Nike advertisements suggest, "Just Do It" is the catch phrase for getting a local wilderness program up and running. The first few camps will be tremendous learning experiences, provided all involved are open to positive growth and change. Chambers' (1992: 90) notion of "failing forwards" is a great one, where learning by doing is acknowledged. Local people must just get in and coordinate a camp if they seriously believe there are benefits for the youth of the community.

Forward planning is an essential aspect of the process and today it is difficult to coordinate a professional program without a good base of financial support. Camp organizers would do well to spend extended periods of time exploring sources of financial assistance. The number of philanthropic trusts existing in Alberta and the considerable community support for this project demonstrates the great potential for camp funding, especially for tangible items such as program facilities or equipment. A twelve month planning and implementation program is likely necessary.

My advice is for the community to aim high with any camp initiative they believe in. Personally I do not hold much regard for one day or weekend programs designed for personal, social and ecological change. To achieve the true benefits of a Rediscovery program requires a longer term immersion into a wilderness area, and a sequential and dynamic program of hands-on activities. I wish the community well with their future endeavors and shall enjoy hearing of any success stories in the years ahead.

Recommendations for Rediscovery International

As mentioned earlier, this has neither been a formalized Rediscovery camp project nor have I investigated an aspect of Rediscovery Wilderness Camps. Some would therefore suggest it as inappropriate for me to be making recommendations to the Rediscovery International Foundation. This project has attempted to document a local wilderness camp based upon the founding principles of the Rediscovery 'model' and so I present the following insights to Rediscovery with the hope they shall contribute to the ongoing growth of their organization and perhaps also assist other camps with their own evolution.

As I have highlighted earlier, there is room to promote the successes, strengths, and challenges of camps involved in Rediscovery. Certainly the 'development' stories from other camps would assist other communities establish their own programs.

The Athabasca / Calling Lake community was intent on developing a program that acknowledged local knowledge, cultural strengths, and ecological diversity. Unfortunately the literature on Rediscovery has not provided adequate insight to strategies for accessing such knowledge or strategies for empowering local people to share their special gifts as leaders or Elders. There are opportunities for community empowerment success stories, particularly those that have assisted local people to draw the strengths of their own traditions, to be incorporated into the Rediscovery literature and the Spring cultural training program coordinated by the Foundation. Similarly, the "Rediscovery" activities promoted in Henley's (1989) book do not go far enough in terms of local program development. I do not believe Rediscovery has a role in sharing the cultural activities of distinctive native groups, but I would like to encourage the Foundation to consider strategies for encouraging camps to incorporate more local and perhaps unique program elements.

The 'distant' support provided by the Rediscovery International Foundation does not totally embrace the notion of community empowerment. Whilst I acknowledge the fine line between assisting a community and controlling a local initiative, the Foundation would do well in more thoroughly promoting existing camps as models to communities interested in establishing their own programs. Valuable assistance could be provided through sharing strategies for the accessing of local knowledge and encouraging Elders to become involved, by providing suggestions for ensuring local protocols are observed, and by recommending approaches for encouraging local program content. Henley's (1989) guidebook does provide some support and guidance in this area, but I would like to encourage the Foundation to investigate strategies for assisting communities with a little more hands-on involvement. When the local camp committee finally elected to join with the Rediscovery Foundation little tangible information was shared to the group other than written material on our health and safety obligations. Some personal contact at such a time by Rediscovery Foundation members would have likely provided additional motivation and support for the committee, leading to an enhanced level of community empowerment.

Notwithstanding the above comments, the Rediscovery International Foundation has a 'hands-off' approach to new camp developments. Their style is to encourage local people to do what they feel is important and for local people to retain control of their own initiatives. I applaud this strategy on a conceptual level and can only encourage the Foundation to keep providing support without becoming totally involved. The Foundation and all involved with Rediscovery camps should feel proud of what they have already achieved. Provided important protocols are respected and local program activities and leadership is retained, Rediscovery will continue to be a growing phenomenon in the area of cultural and wilderness education.

We were fortunate to have a representative of Rediscovery International available to talk with our organizing group during the early stages of the project. The presentation of an eagle feather during that talk was an important connection to an existing camp in northern Alberta and those from the camp organizing group took much from that important symbolic gift. I would encourage Foundation members to visit with camps in the midst of evolution as there are tremendous benefits to such first hand information. Whilst there are barriers to this form of input from Foundation members, including the importance of being invited to the community, the rewards will be considerable I am certain. Perhaps staff from existing camps would also be in a position to share of their own experiences.

After this project I am left with many unanswered questions on Rediscovery. I am curious how Rediscovery camps would cope if there were no local Elders available. I similarly question how appropriate it is for outside educators to be involved or for activities that have little local relevance to be presented. Tom Henley's Rediscovery (1989) guidebook is full of excellent earth education / acclimatization style environmental activities and adventure based games and initiatives, but many of these do not specifically relate to the prairies of Alberta nor are they traditional activities of the local people. Many of the activities promoted in Henley's text can really only be program additions if a community is to really buy into Rediscovery's bioregional philosophy. The inclusion of a section on strategies for locally-oriented program development would be a valuable addition to a future edition.

There is also an openness in the Rediscovery philosophy for native and non-native youth and camp leaders to become involved with camps. Yet I question the appropriateness of an outsider such as myself leading Rediscovery activities, for I have little *local* knowledge to share and my teachings would become similar to what I am used to teaching - mainstream outdoor education approaches. From my experiences working with native Elders and leaders, my involvement as a camp leader would quickly see the activities I was presenting privileged by the Elders themselves and therefore presented before the important activities of local people. Such enculturation would quickly deem Rediscovery as just another wilderness camp, for it would loose its local cultural uniqueness. The bioregional aspects of Rediscovery, including the focus upon local traditions and native wisdom, are the real strengths to the movement. Local people must be encouraged to share with youth what is important locally, not just mainstream outdoor education activities that can be experienced at any summer camp. Warnings for outsiders intent on involvement in Rediscovery - style camps may become necessary to protect the uniqueness of the Rediscovery movement.

Lessons could also be shared surrounding the protection of local traditions and protocols, and the potential inappropriateness of sharing traditional activities by outsiders. The first sweat lodge I laid eyes on was in Long Bay, New Zealand, and it is only now after experiencing 'sweats' in Alberta that I recognize the widespread misappropriation of native wisdom and ceremonial elements into outdoor programs worldwide. Rediscovery will need to ensure staff and programs under the Rediscovery umbrella do not fall into similar traps. There is the potential for tremendous harm to be done by someone without cultural authority to be sharing some local camp elements.

Conversely, Rediscovery promotes many activities in Henley's (1989) guidebook that do not belong to Rediscovery, nor are they necessarily Aboriginal in origin. The Foundation would be wise to acknowledge more explicitly those activities borrowed from other sources. Again, I would like to encourage Rediscovery camps to utilize local activities rather than many of those promoted in Henley's text.

Regardless of the above points, I honestly believe in the concept and importance of Rediscovery for First Nation communities. I am certain there are many exciting and innovative camp programs existing in the Rediscovery movement and I encourage the Foundation to research their programs, to market their activities, and to promote the vision of Rediscovery widely. I wish the Rediscovery International Foundation and their many affiliated camps the very best and I look forward to the movement becoming a significant one in the field of outdoor, environmental, adventure, and experiential education fields.

Recommendations for future Research

This study has touched on a great number of areas worthy of further investigation. There are many opportunities for better understanding 'the' Rediscovery approach. I have only introduced one strategy for program development, and introduced Rediscovery as having a role to play in community development and extension. These aspects of Rediscovery need further investigation, as do current programs in terms of evaluation and effectiveness, and exploring ways of ensuring local program input. There is also some reference to Rediscovery as a form of 'Rites of Passage' for native youth. Further investigations would be valuable in exploring the connections between modern outdoor, environmental education practice and traditional rites of passage practices.

There is scope to examine the emerging role of modern Elders in Canadian society. I am also interested in the influences of 'sweats' as a component of healing paths from alcohol and drug addictions for Elders involved with Rediscovery. There is a high incidence of cigarette smoking by the Cree and Metis people of the Athabasca area and it would be interesting to explore the root causes and influences of cultural traditions upon local smoking habits.

There has been a diversity of comments about the impacts of residential schooling upon members of the Calling Lake and greater Athabasca communities, and an interesting project could involve documenting the influences of such schooling upon local people.

Many times during this project I have been tempted to explore the ecological perspectives of the local people in this study. Some Elders definitely live an ecocentric lifestyle, whilst others are clearly athropocentric in their everyday lives. A diversity of opinions also exist regarding the appropriateness of local forestry initiatives in the northern Boreal forest. The impact of current forestry practices upon local peoples is to a large degree unknown.

Final thoughts

As an outsider to Canadian society I have been able to examine the 'Indian' situation with some degree of objectivity and I now recognize the tremendous complexities surrounding the many issues impacting upon local native people in Canada. The various issues surrounding exactly who is and who is not a native person in Canada is testimony to this. Like all developing and 'developed' countries in the world there are issues and problems in Canada resulting from a clash between the traditional and the modern, and between cultures. In my home country I regularly hear of people talking about what can be done about the "Maori problem", just as I have heard Canadians voicing their opinions on the "Indian Problem".

There will likely always be people with a self centered, and often ignorant, perspective on life that are prepared to discriminate against others who are theoretically different from themselves in some fashion. Couture (1985) highlights native cultures need to be acknowledged as dynamic, adaptive, and adapting, and not limited to the traditional past. Stereotypes need to be forgotten and all people regardless of cultural makeup known and respected as individuals. As LaRoque (1975: 44) shares, Indians in Canadian society are normal everyday people and need to be recognized as such...

> "What do Indians want? ...with the rest of humanity, Native people are concerned with the mundane but basic things of life: food, shelter, clothing and love. They are worried about inflation, the effects of alcohol, car accidents, health, and their children. As individuals they are interested in relationships, in personal achievements... Native people are ordinary human beings with ordinary human wants. But Native people do not want to sacrifice their Indianness, their unique heritage, in order to have the basic necessities of life. And Native people feel that there is nothing inordinate about this simple desire,

> with which ideally, Canadians would agree; that basic survival and personal freedom should not be diametrically opposed to each other."

Rediscovery wilderness camps provide an experiential medium for people from a diversity of cultures to get together, to experience the outdoors, and to understand each other a little better. Participatory research approaches similarly have the potential for an outsider to acknowledge and appreciate different perspectives, wisdom, and thought, and most importantly to empower local people.

CHAPTER 6

POSTSCRIPT

The drafting of this work occurred in the fifteen months following my immersion into the Athabasca and Calling Lake communities. Prior to going to print, I would like to acknowledge some of the developments that have occurred during this time in three main areas: the community of Athabasca, the community of Calling Lake, and the Rediscovery International Foundation.

Athabasca: There have been a number of staff changes in the Athabasca Native Friendship Center over the past twelve months. A new Center Director has been employed, as well as a permanent Community Youth worker in recent months. Trevor, the past Director, spent time and energy developing a wilderness camp project during the 1996 summer, utilizing the funds remaining from the 1995 project. The camp was coordinated in a forestry area close to the Athabasca township, with a number of local children attending. The Elders from Calling Lake were not involved, nor were youth from the area. Accounts vary somewhat regarding the success of the project, but the fact a wilderness camp project took place is evidence of the commitment the Center had for the youth of the area.

Trevor has subsequently moved on and the new Center Director has established the Youth worker position. A Youth Camp Coordinator is shortly to be hired for the 1997 camp program. The local community appears behind the development of a local wilderness camp near Athabasca.

Calling Lake: My discussions with George from Calling Lake suggest the cultural sweats, fasts, and bush activities are continuing as a regular feature for the youth of the community during the summer months. A camp was coordinated in the summer of 1996 for the local youth of the area, with a minimal budget and utilizing local staff. It appears there were many fish caught and smoked during the experience, and that there were only a few days of rain. George no longer conducts research work on behalf of the Arctic Institute. The community indigenous knowledge recording project he was involved with has been completed, with George as a key Elder-informant. The community of Wabasca-Desmarais has plans of a wilderness facility north of Calling Lake which may be appropriate for use by both the Wabasca and Calling Lake communities.

The Rediscovery International Foundation: In 1996 a new edition of the Rediscovery guidebook was published. Thom Henley is again the author and he has added a number of sections to the text, including an important page acknowledging the importance of respecting local traditions and protocols and of the risk for outsiders for misappropriating native activities. The Rediscovery community continues to grow and the Spring conferences remain as an important opportunity for staff from new and established camps to get together and re-energize before the forthcoming summer programs.

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APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY ANALYSIS CHECKLIST[8]

A) Cultural Analysis - the local system of meaning.

- Is the population of the community noted?
- Is the racial breakdown of the community noted?
- Has the culture(s) of the community been identified?
- Has diversity between cultures been highlighted?
- Are there specific rules (not laws) serving the community?
- Is there a sense of pride amongst the people?
- Are there unwritten elements of the structure (and order) within the community?
- Has a common identity for the people been noted?
- Are there acknowledged roles for the community members?
- Has the common language been identified?

B) Structural Analysis - the patterned integration between individuals and groups of individuals.

- Are there key interactions between people?
- Is there a sense of belonging for individuals in the community?
- Is there acceptance of others into the community?
- Can you recognize people belonging to the community?
- Have you analyzed the reasons why people gather in the community?
- Have you analyzed the benefits for membership of the community?
- Can you recognize a "typical" family within the community?
- Is there a means of conflict management?
- How do people relate to one another?
- Are social boundaries identified?

C) Spatial Analysis - physical location of resources of the community

- Have you identified the material resources of areas within the community?
- Can you identify strengths in the location of the community?
- Have you analyzed the skills and capacity of the people?
- Is there community economic diversity?
- What is the level of family income?
- Do you feel this income level is adequate?
- Are there community land boundaries?

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[8] Adapted from Brown, D. (1989) Defining Community [unpublished course material prepared for the School of Native Studies, University of Alberta.]

- Are there mediating institutions such as a band office? church?
- Can you identify evidence of social and psychological support?

D) Temporal Analysis - the notion of community existing beyond the analysis

- Is there an oral history of the community?
- Is there a written community history?
- Does the community have traditions?
- Can you identify community goals and vision?
- Is there evidence of leadership development within the community?
- Are the assets of the community being accumulated, or depleted?
- Is there evidence of economic development?
- Is there a changing division of power and / or public control?

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

The following information shall be shared with all Elders to be interviewed during the first meeting, after a brief introductory dialogue...

- **Performance of necessary protocols...**

"I give you these things as a gift from the Creator. Please forgive me, for I do not know the right ways of giving these things. In New Zealand, where I was born, when you approach a Maori Grandfather or Grandmother for advice and direction you give a koha, a gift. I give you these gifts and trust I have not offended you by not doing things the way in which you are accustomed."

- **An introduction...**

"My name is John. I am from New Zealand and am in Canada working at the University in Edmonton. In New Zealand I was involved as a teacher utilizing the outdoors as a classroom for youth to learn about some of the important things in life. I was invited here by the group organizing the 'rediscovery' project this summer at Orloff Lake. I am very interested in seeing the development of the summer camp and as part of my work at the University I am hoping to help out with the project. I really think the local youth will learn a great deal about themselves and their natural surroundings."

- **The Interview process and time commitments...**

"I am hoping we can get together two or three times over the next month or so and discuss the 'rediscovery' camp project. I am really interested in hearing about what you feel is important for the youth of today to learn and how these important things could be taught in the 'rediscovery' camp."

- **A financial disclaimer...**

"I do not have much money and cannot pay you for you time involved with discussions. I hope you will consider my request to talk as a contribution to the 'rediscovery project."

- **A statement indicating the Elders right to withdrawal...**

"I do not want to put any pressure on you to discuss the 'rediscovery' project with me. Please feel free to be as involved as you want, to share what you feel is appropriate. If you do not want the discussions to continue please tell me and we will stop right away. I will not be upset or offended if this happens."

- **The recording process, confidentiality, anonymity...**

"It is my plan to remember our discussions and to write notes after each meeting. These notes will be confidential between you and me - no one else will see them and I will not be discussing our conversations with anyone. I will not be putting your name on the notes and only I will know the notes were from our discussions."

- **Validating themes...**

"After we have met I would like to return again to discuss my notes and to ensure what I have written is what you really meant when we talked. If you then feel it appropriate I am hoping you or I can present these to the group organizing the 'rediscovery' camp at Orloff Lake, so the program can include those things you feel are important for the youth to learn."

- **Documenting the research process...**

"After the first camp is run at Orloff lake I hope to document the development of the camp by writing a paper for the University. I would like you to know the specific details of our talks will not be included in this paper, or other papers written on the project, unless that is your wish. Our talks will always remain confidential. All my notes will, at the end of this interview project, be given to the community. If you would prefer I can return the notes from our talks directly to you. I would also like to discuss with you the final paper before it is sent to the University, if you are interested."

- **Informed Verbal Consent...**

"Elder, all this information I need to share with you as part of the protocols of the University of Alberta. I am hoping you will accept our discussions as helping with the Orloff lake project. It is important you also recognize I am helping with the project as part of my work with the University. There is no requirement for you to help me with this project. I will not be offended if you do not wish to be involved, or if you decide not to be involved at any time.

Are you willing to talk about the Orloff Lake camp, knowing you are free to stop our discussions at any time?" (Considerable silence to facilitate a verbal response)

- **Thanks...**

Regardless of the outcome I shall thank the Elder. I have no problem with stopping my interview at any time if that is the wish of the Elder.

(From previous experience in working with Elderly Native persons, interviews need to be reasonably unstructured, at least initially. It is likely the Elder shall decide what he or she feels is important to be discussed and shall likely lead the 'talks'. I shall need to be flexible in running with the direction provided!)

APPENDIX C: ELDER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The following are the meeting venues and times for each Elder informant involved with this project. As discussed earlier many of these 'interviews' were of an informal nature and often in a rambling response style.

TRACY:

Fort Chipewyan, Spring 1994
Telephone discussion, Summer 1994.
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, late Summer 1994.
Collington, (Tracy's home) Fall 1994.
Athabasca Coffee shop, Winter (January) 1995.
Collington, Winter (March) 1995 (Tracy's home)
Collington, Tracy's home, Early Spring 1995 (April)
Calling Lake School, cultural dance performance, Spring 1995
Calling Lake Community Center, camp meeting, Spring 1995
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, camp meeting
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, camp meeting
Collington, Tracy's home, early Summer 1995, 3 days, 2 nights
AL-PAC Mill and travel, Summer 1995, whilst collecting food.
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, late summer 1995, post camp
Wabasca-Desmarais Youth Conference, late Summer, 1995.

GEORGE:

Athabasca Rediscovery meeting and discussion, Winter 1995.
Calling Lake Community Center, camp meeting, Spring 1995
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, camp meeting
Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, camp meeting

Calling Lake (George's home), Spring 1995.

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting

Calling Lake (Rachel and Jeff's home), dinner, Summer 1995

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting

Calling Lake, George and Nadine's home, Summer 1995

Calling Lake, George and Nadine's home, post camp, late Summer 1995

Calling Lake, George and Nadine's home, post camp, late Summer 1995

NADINE:

Calling Lake Community Center, camp meeting, Spring 1995

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, camp meeting

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, camp meeting

Calling Lake (George's home), Spring 1995.

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting

Calling Lake, George and Nadine's home, Summer 1995

Calling Lake, George and Nadine's home, post camp, late Summer 1995

Calling Lake, George and Nadine's home, post camp, late Summer 1995

FRANK:

Fort McMurray, Spring 1994

Rediscovery Conference, Fort Chipewyan, Spring 1994.

Athabasca Community meeting, Winter (January) 1995

Coffee shop discussion, Winter 1995 (January)

Edmonton Municipal Airport, Late Winter (March) 1995

Rediscovery Conference, Port Hardy, Spring 1995

Hotel, Edmonton, early Summer 1995

GEOFF:

Calling Lake (Rachel and Jeff's home), Lunch & dinner, Spring 1995

Calling Lake (post sweat discussions) Spring 1995

Calling Lake (Rachel and Jeff's home), dinner, Summer 1995

RACHEL:

Calling Lake (Rachel and Jeff's home), Lunch & dinner, Spring 1995

Calling Lake (Rachel and Jeff's home), dinner, Summer 1995

ANDY:

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, coffee meeting

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, coffee meeting

TREVOR:

Calling Lake Community Center, camp meeting, Spring 1995

Athabasca (Trevor's home), Spring 1995

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, camp meeting

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Spring 1995, camp meeting

Calling Lake (George's home), Spring 1995, afternoon only.

Athabasca (Trevor's home), Spring 1995, 3 nights, 2 days

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, Summer 1995, camp meeting

Athabasca (Trevor's Apartment) 2 days, 2 nights, Summer 1995

Athabasca Native Friendship Center, late summer 1995, post camp

CHARLIE:

Calling Lake (Rachel and Jeff's home), Lunch & dinner, Spring 1995

Calling Lake, Summer 1995, cultural camp activities discussion.

Calling Lake, Summer 1995, Jeff and Rachel's house), dinner

SMITH

Wabasca-Desmarais Youth Conference, late Summer, 1995.

FRANCIOS:

Wabasca-Desmarais Youth Conference, late Summer, 1995.

JACK:

Calling Lake (Rachel and Jeff's home), Lunch & dinner, Spring 1995

Calling Lake (post sweat discussions) Spring 1995

Calling Lake, Summer 1995, cultural camp activities discussion.

Calling Lake, Summer 1995, Jeff and Rachel's house), dinner

NIGEL:

Calling Lake (Rachel & Jeff's home), Lunch & dinner, Spring 1995

Calling Lake (post sweat discussions) Spring 1995

Calling Lake, Summer 1995, (Jeff and Rachel's house), dinner